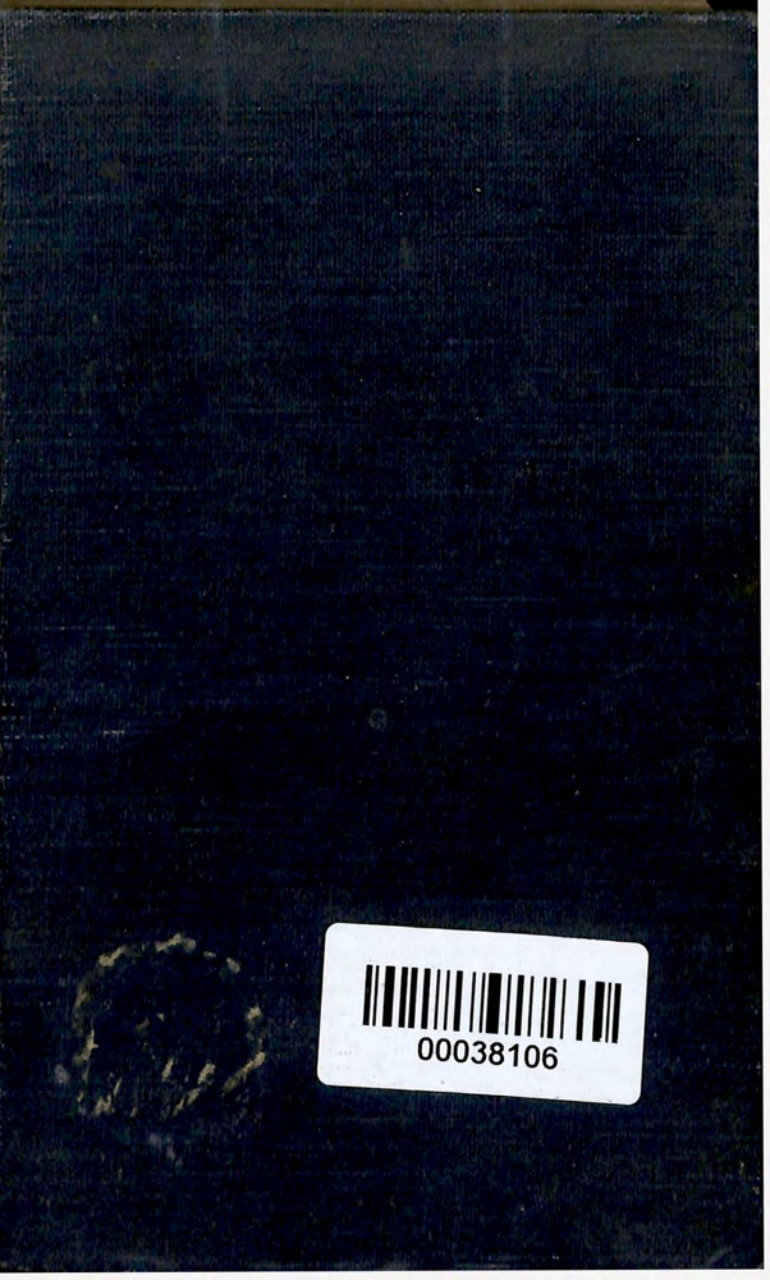
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PICTURESQUE SKETCHES

OF

GREECE AND TURKEY.

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By AUBREY DE VERE.

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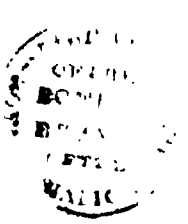
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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CHAPTER I.

THE IONIAN ISLANDS.

Sail down the Adriatic—Arrival at Corfu—Scenery of Corfu—Character and aspect of the Ionian Greeks—Town of Corfu—The Palace of the Lord High Commissioner—A Reception at the Government-house—Prorogation of Parliament—University—Sunset at Corfu—Ancient Remains—Temple of Neptune—Nereido Castro—Departure from Corfu—Paxos—Leucadia—Sappho's Rock—Cephalonia—Zante—An English Steamer.

I CANNOT fulfil my promise and give you an account of my Greek tour without vividly recalling the pleasure which I experienced on my first approach to the shores which I had mused on in so many a youthful dream. The delight of advancing rapidly into a delicious climate, dipping into warmer, purer, and more fragrant air, can seldom be forgotten by one who has ever known it. The weather in Italy, which

we northerns regard as a paradise "where never wind blows loudly," had been severe before I left it. At Bologna the cold had been so intense, that, even cloaked to the chin, I could hardly make my way from the hotel to the theatre; and at Ancona it was far from agreeable. You may imagine therefore the delight with which, feeling the change almost momently, I left the north and all its asperities behind me, as we steered down the Adriatic. Before the first evening I had forgotten whether my cloak was on or off; and the second night I lay on the deck till twelve o'clock without remembering that it was January and not June. The breeze, instead of passing over the snows of the Apennines, came to us warm from the Ægean, and mingled the softness of a southern clime with the wild and exhilarating odours of the sea. The moon was full, and pierced the firmament with a light so keen and penetrating, that, like the sculptors of old who distinguished their statues of the Virgin Huntress by the far glance of the direct, well-opened eye, we remembered that Dian was no

mere patroness of midnight dreamers or moping lovers, but that she was sister of Apollo, and that her beams, like her brother's, were arrows from an immortal bow. Beneath her orb the plane of waters seemed to swell into a wide and plenary light to the remote horizon: every rock, however distant, shone with silver radiance; and all around us—dark blue sea, and bright blue heaven—was as luminous as it was warm and joyous, except where the islands, of which we passed three or four successively, trailed dim shadows over the shoals, or flung a darker streak of purple beyond their rocky promontories.

We arrived at Corfu within fifty hours after leaving Ancona. It was too late to allow of our disembarking: but on such an occasion a traveller enjoys his prolonged anticipation of a feast thus extended before him in the dubious light of the imagination. We thought on the morrow, and found it no hardship to remain on deck half the night, looking round and round upon a scene which by night or day is more beautiful than any western bay, gulf, or lake. When that morrow

had arrived, a single excursion was sufficient to prove that my expectations had not been pitched too high. The island of Corfu encircles the bay in which the town is situated, completely enclosing it on the north and south; while, to the east, the mountains of Epirus and Albania frame the picture, making the sea look like a great lake. From the margin of that sea the mountains rise to a height of from 3000 to 4000 feet: immediately behind them stand the snowy ranges sung of by the Greek poets of old. The latter are about 7000 feet in height: they have not, however, "taken the veil," like the Swiss mountains, which live to themselves above the clouds; but smile from their blue region upon a beaming sea, looking down over the shoulder of the terrestrial mountains ranged before them, with a glance at once familiar and divine, like that which the Homeric gods cast over the heads of demigods and heroes upon the affairs of mortals In some places a third chain of mountains rises behind the others, and the effect is indescribably grand at sunset, when

the nearer ridge has put on its violet vest, while that above it is mantled in crimson; and along the highest, which then seems transparent, floats that rose-coloured flame, the quintessential spirit of light. Within the island, the hills are from 2000 to 3000 feet high, and are in most places covered with groves of olives, whose "knarled and unwedgeable" trunks, dried up and wrinkled by the fervid handling of many a summer, seem as if they might have gained their worldly experience before Ulysses himself had cut his wise teeth or told his first lie. The ground is never flat except in a single instance; nor, on the other hand, does it swell into those soft and smooth undulations which delight the traveller whose foot tarries upon the green slopes of Clarens and Vevay, and displaces the fruit-tree blossoms with which they are reddened in spring. It is abrupt and broken, diversified with rocky shelves, terraces of vine, heathy knolls, and hollows filled with mint, thyme, and other aromatic herbs. Here and there the eye

is caught by a thicket of myrtle, blossoming in the distance, or by some inland promontory that dips into the dell, but shakes, before it reaches the shadow, a green and golden radiance from the orange grove that tufts its steeps. I give you the materials, and you may make up the picture with your best skill, and without fear of surpassing the reality: you may sprinkle the meadows with geraniums in full flower, and with thickets of rose; and if neither are the sort which our florists would most prize for their rareness, each grows with an abundance that paints the island wilderness with colours such as few gardens can boast. The beauty of Corfu is especially characterised by its union of wildness with richness.

In the whole of the island, undivided as the sea that mirrors its bosky shores, I did not see a wall, or hedge which a child could not have squeezed itself through as easily as a lion of Eden could have pierced one of Eve's sweet-briar fences. The shores are indented by numberless long and strangely-shaped bays;

sometimes widening inwards into little lakes, sometimes shallowing into lagunes, and sometimes leaving bare a rock, over which the sea shatters itself in showers of white foam and driving mist — a pleasant vapour-bath for the shrubs that bloom around. Here and there the water eddies round some little green island, with a few trees to define its low margin, and perhaps an old chapel in the centre, the whole space above the waves probably not exceeding half an acre. The air of this enchanting region is of a clearness which enables you to do full justice to the abundant beauty with which you are surrounded. You look through it as through a diamond, and fancy you possess the eyes of an Olympian, not of a mortal. You stand on the top of an eminence, and feel yourself "in a large room," observing, even in the far distance, the gradations of colours, the shapes of individual objects, and the beauty of minute details, as if the whole lay close around you. The amplitude of the landscape imparts to it a characteristic nobleness; and the natural

theatre in which you stand, is, when compared to that of our northern scenery, much as the temple of Bacchus, in which 30,000 spectators witnessed at once a tragedy of Sophocles, when compared with Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

Nothing can be more different in character than the landscapes of the north and of the south. The character of the former is grave, subdued, and tender, abounding in passages of pathos and mystery, though glorified, not seldom, by a golden haze. That of the south, on the other hand, is at once majestic and joyous, ample in its dimensions, but not abounding in a complex variety of detail; clearly defined, severe in structure, well brought out into the light; but at the same time unspiritual in its scope, appealing less to the heart than to the fancy, expressing everything to the understanding, and, consequently, reserving little for a slowly apprehensive imagination. An analogous distinction may perhaps be traced in the character of the northern and southern races. In every country, indeed, there exists a certain analogy

between the outward shapes of nature, and the mind it has nursed and helped to form.

The woodlands of Corfu consist chiefly of the olive. Many travellers complain of the monotonous colouring of the southern olive-woods; I think, however, that in this luminous region the effect would be too dazzling if the predominant colour were not a sober one, which, by its uniformity, as colour, permits the eye to appreciate the exquisite gradations of light and shade. The brilliancy of the clouds also requires the contrast of something more grave to relieve the eye as it falls from them or glances aside from that most radiant of visual objects, an orange-grove. The orange-trees grow to about the size apple-trees reach with us; and so dense is the mass of their dark and glittering leaves, that you would fancy the nightingale—nay, the nightingale's song—could hardly force its way through their ambush. They flash of themselves in the sun, though unmoved by a wind not often strong enough to disturb their phalanx. The upper leaves, being younger than the rest,

are of a transparent golden green, and shine with a perpetual sunshine of their own ; and in the midst hang those great yellow and crimson globes, which Andrew Marvel sings of as "orange lamps in a green night."

I wish I could give as good an account of the Greeks as of their island abode. In outward bearing, at least, they are not unworthy of being its inhabitants. In few parts of the world is there to be found so comely a race. They possess almost always, fine features, invariably fine heads, and flashing eyes ; and their forms and gestures have a noble grace about them, which in less favoured climes is seldom to be met with, even among the higher ranks. A Greek never stands in an ungraceful position ; indeed his bearing often deserves to be called majestic : but his inward gifts seldom correspond, if the estimate commonly formed of him be not very incorrect, with his outward aspect. The root of the evil is now what it was in old times ; for the Ionian Greeks are a false people. Seldom, even by accident, do

they say the thing that is; and never are they ashamed of being detected in a lie. Such a character hardly contains the elements of moral amelioration. Experience is lost upon it. Those who are false to others are false to themselves also; what they see, will always be what they desire to see; from whatever is repulsive they will turn their eyes away; and neither time nor suffering can bring them a lesson which ingenuity and self-love are not able to evade. The Ionian Greeks are also greatly deficient in industry. They do not care to improve their condition; their wants are few, and they will do little work beyond that of picking up the olives which fall from the tree. These the women carry home in baskets, almost all the labour falling on them, while the men idle away their everlasting, unhallowed holyday, telling stories, walking in procession, or showing as much diplomacy in some bargain about a capote as a Russian ambassador could display while settling the affairs of Europe with Lord Palmerston. Their dress is eminently picturesque. On their

heads they wear, sometimes a sort of turban, sometimes a red cap; round the waist they fasten a wide white zone; and their trowsers, which do not descend below the knee, are so large, that, fastened together at the mid-leg, they have all the effect of flowing drapery, their colour in general being crimson.

The town of Corfu is a strange medley, in which a character, now Greek and now Italian, is oddly diversified by French and English associations. The house of our Lord High Commissioner is called "The Palace," and deserves the name. It is of very considerable size, is built of Maltese stone, and abounds in stately apartments. Soldiers stand in waiting along the corridors; and the landing-places and ante-rooms catch a picturesque effect from the Albanian servants, who move about with a prompt decisive grace, in their jewelled vests, and tightly-fitting buskins. In front of the palace is the esplanade, thronged all day by the red coats and well-harnessed horses of English soldiers. In the evening it is compa-

ratively quiet, and you may meet no one but a few Greek priests, sometimes alone, sometimes in pairs, pacing the long acacia avenues, with their black sacerdotal caps, black robe, dark eye,—piercing at once and still,—venerable beard, and hair that flows in waves down their backs. In the evening every one goes to the opera; nor are even the smaller islands without their theatre.

As the spring advanced my stay at Corfu became more and more agreeable. A kindlier warmth crept every day into the air, which lost nothing, however, of its sharp and clear freshness, while it gained in sweetness. Every evening I enjoyed more and more my walk along the esplanade, between rows of Persian lilacs about the size of our birch-trees, and in redundant bloom. Under them, at each side, were beds of geraniums and all sorts of hot-house plants, which extended their ranks, as if in a conservatory a quarter of a mile long; and around them, as soon as evening fell, the fire-flies played with their trails of green light, pure

as a diamond, till one would have fancied that the air had caught life at every pore, and darted about in sparks of electric fire. The night of the Queen's birth-day a grand ball was given at the Lord High Commissioner's house. The palace looked every inch a palace, the whole of it being thrown open, brilliantly lighted, and filled with the chief people of the island,—not, I dare say, selected on any very exclusive principle. The scene was truly festal in aspect, and everywhere there was that air of enjoyment, the absence of which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of those great London parties at which the grave guests seem to be performing some penitential duty, remembering the sins of their youth, and fashionably repenting in purple and fine linen. While some were dancing others walked up and down a magnificent gallery which runs along the top of the portico, the whole length of the building. Above us stretched an awning which protected us from the dew; beneath us were countless flowers, which did not injure the air by breathing it

before us; around us the fire-flies flashed, and from within the music of the band streamed through all the casements and floated far away over the town. It pursued me through the thickets and gardens in which I occasionally took refuge for the sake of enjoying cooler air, and looking back on the distant revelry through the bowers of lilacs and festoons of roses. From those gardens it was not easy to return to the palace; but their solitudes were made more delightful by the intrusion of the distant mirth.

Another characteristic scene at which I "assisted" was the prorogation of the parliament; a scene that illustrated well the meaning of our British "protection," and the freedom of the Ionian republic. The parliament sits in the Lord High Commissioner's palace; and the members entered between files of soldiers, who gave them a somewhat unceremonious greeting, so far as "privilege" is concerned, clashing their arms every moment, with emphatic loyalty, on the marble steps. As the president took his place,

the band was playing "God save the Queen." The moment the Lord High Commissioner had finished his speech, a loud peal of artillery rang out from the citadel, and pronounced the "Amen" in an audible voice; and the much-complimented, and somewhat bewildered, senators took their departure, amid the gleaming of swords, the glaring of uniforms, and the prancing of cavalry that charged up and down the esplanade. On the whole, the spectacle was both picturesque and significant, and would have met the cordial approbation of Queen Elizabeth, who marvelled that the members of the "nether" house should sometimes be betrayed into meddling with "matters of state."

There is at Corfu a university,—not using the word, however, quite in the sense in which it is applied to Oxford or Cambridge. During a visit which I paid to it I had some interesting conversation with a Greek professor, apparently a man of much learning. Among other things he discussed the subject of Greek prosody, and made himself merry with what he called our

preposterous mode of pronouncing. I referred to the poets, and asked how he could make harmony out of Homer's hexameters on his metrical principles. He, on the other hand, appealed to experience and to precedent, and affirmed that our prosodiacal system was merely an arbitrary and fanciful device of our own, which pleased us because we had invented it and were used to it. Having no demonstrative process at hand, I appealed, as prudent controversialists do on such occasions, to common sense, to the moral sense, and to every infallible intuition which occupies the space between these extremes: especially I appealed to the ear. The little lively old man clapped both his hands to his head, and answered, "I too have ears." I looked at his head, and there were two ears, not at all too long, and in all respects as good-looking as another man's. The professor also stood on his native soil, discussed his native language, and was paid for knowing all about the matter. Accordingly, I made my submission. The only mode in which I can

reconcile local traditions with the needs of our western ears is by supposing that the chaunt of the ancient minstrel, in reciting, swallowed up all discords, just as in our cathedral chaunt mere prose can be accommodated to music, whether the clause be long or short.

The sunsets of Corfu as far exceed those of Venice, as the latter surpass a London sunset seen on one of those foggy evenings when that city, looked at from Hyde Park, might be described as a mist with trees and houses in it. One, in particular, I shall never forget; I rubbed my eyes, thinking I was in a dream, and mounted from rock to rock, trying to assure myself that it was a reality. The colours were wholly different in quality from any that I had ever seen in clouds, flowers, metals, feathers, or even jewels. The Poet's expression, "an illumination of all gems," gives you but a faint idea of it. The effect, on the whole, was very dark. In a few minutes the splendid pageant had spread itself over all the heavens, the west being but little distinguishable from the

east. A sudden shade fell over the scene, (the sky appearing to come nearer to the earth,) at the same time that you seemed to look for leagues and leagues through the depth of colours as glowing as if a world of dark and shining jewels had been melted into an atmosphere, and suspended over our sphere. The woods and glens below, "invested with purpureal gleams," suggested to me, in their dewy darkness, the Elysian fields, and the shades where the heroic dead found rest amid their amaranthine banks, and meads of asphodel. Such colours could never have been represented in a picture. Even if the amethystine and vermilion hues could have been intelligibly rendered, nature only could have reconciled them to such shades of green and bronze. It was as if the sky had been a vast vault of painted glass: — nor perhaps will anything grander be seen till the millennium morn. These are the accidents which reveal to us at least what is *possible*, and may well be precious to us on that account alone. A region in which such effects were

frequently realised should be peopled only by such forms as we see in Perugino's pictures, standing in their rapt beauty and eternal serenity against a sunset sky of pale green.

I spare you the whole of my small learning on the subject of the ancient Corcyra. Where lay the Homeric Phæacia, and where the city of Alcinous stood, nobody knows; and discussions on such subjects, when much prolonged, prove chiefly that the disputant has not caught much of the genius loci. Ulysses probably troubled himself little about the genealogy of Circe or Calypso; and the modern traveller need not very closely investigate questions about Ulysses, which, however they may be decided, leave the legend where it stands. The habitation of such things is the human fancy; and whoever wants to know the exact spot where the Hero was found by Nausicaa, had better put by his map, walk along the coasts, and fix on a spot where the meeting *ought* to have taken place. I found a dozen such. There are, alas! few remains of anti-

quity in Corfu. Some traces still exist of a temple, probably dedicated to Neptune. They are situated in a little green dell which hangs, amid olive-bowers, on the steeps beside the eastern sea. Some relics of ancient mythology also hold their ground in a modified form. Near the ancient Leucimna is an eminence called "Nereido Castro," a title derived from the circumstance that the spot is accounted a favourite resort of the Nereids, whose tutelary care is not yet quite forgotten, though no longer invoked with libation and vows.

Some persons are simple enough to imagine that the south is a land of perpetual sunshine. Such is not the case, even in Corfu, that fairest garden of the Adriatic. The morning of my departure was not very promising. During the preceding day the heavy rain fell, as it were, in a mass, on the earth. The next morning the sky was still louring, and the sea, during the preceding month a deep blue, had changed into a turbid and gloomy green. The Albanian

mountains frowned behind their clouds, and the loftier of them were of a threatening purple bordering on black, with the exception of their white summits, and the long rifts down their sides in which the snow still lurked. The sky, however, had become as bright as usual before we had dropped anchor in the bay of Paxos. We had not time to land. The little luxuriant island looked like a smaller Corfu, but without its mountains. Its olive-woods sloped down the hills in all directions to the water's edge, and stood

"With their green faces fix'd upon the flood."

A few windmills clustered together on a mound near the sea; and their circling sails harmonised with that general air of industry and life which contrasted with the Elysian stillness of Corfu's lawns and bays, where the natives think it exertion enough to walk in the sun, and their English protectors wonder that neither new roads nor schools can inspire them with a little Dutch industry or American energy.

We reached the harbour of Santa Maura, the

ancient Leucadia, at about four o'clock in the evening. Landing at the fort, and proceeding thence by a long causeway and a ferry to the town, we wandered on into the island till it was late and dark. Our path lay principally through woods of olive; and after some time the moon silvered the distant mountain-tops wherever they were visible through the gaps in the forest, and rained its white light through the twinkling foliage of the trees close by us, and through the rifts in their aged stems. At night we embarked again; and I was left almost alone on deck, to watch one of the most beautiful and pathetic of spectacles—a moon-setting at sea. It sank with a staid pomp and magnificence analogous to that of sunset, but far more melancholy in effect. The declining orb became a dark orange-colour as it approached the water. The clouds hung depressed around it in heavy masses, wanly tinged, not irradiated, by its light; and the sea, dark everywhere else, burned beneath it with a gloomy fire. The moon had all but disappeared, when the man at the helm called

out to me, "That 's Sappho's Leap." I turned, and its last beam still played on a white rock, the extremity of the Leucadian promontory. That rock will be an object of interest while the world lasts, associated as it is with the memory of the most celebrated woman who has ever lived;—celebrated by a love-song and a love. How far her celebrity was deserved, we shall never know; but travelling as we do, through time as through space, amid a world half-visionary and half-historical, we shall do best to regard such records, as I did the material monument, not with a near or captious scrutiny, but at a distance and by moonlight.

Before eight the next morning we had leaped on the shores of Cephalonia. Its bay is long and narrow, not lustrous like that of Corfu, but clouded with the shadows of steep mountains, which slant to the dim water in masses of barren rock, with scarcely a tree or a blade of grass to diversify them, from the grey ridges above to the caverns below. One of these caverns is a remarkable object, and a great scandal to

the philosophers. It is situated about twenty feet from the margin of the sea, the water of which winds in a stream nearly parallel to the shore for about as many yards, descending in its course with a current so strong as to turn a mill close by. Reaching the cavern, it disappears; and what becomes of it none can discover. Whether it flows along under the bed of the sea, or loses itself among the roots of the mountains, is a mystery not to be solved by the island philosophers. The spot is eminently picturesque, surrounded as it is by rocks fringed with aloes, which protrude their long pointed leaves far before them, and cast immoveable shadows upon the sea-walls among the shelves and ledges. Some of these aloes spired up in thick flower-stems at least twenty feet high, none of which however bore flowers. We walked for hours along the sides of the mountains, which, though generally bare, sink here and there into shallow coves and flat spaces near the sea, clothed with a vivid green and occasionally sprinkled with gardens. A particularly beautiful effect

was produced by the almond-trees, whose pendulous masses of snow-white blossom swayed about in the lightest breeze. The companion of my walk, a Dane, was a man remarkable both for learning and ability. He lectures on history at the military school of Athens,—a position for which he is qualified by an extent of erudition not common even in Germany, the country where he was in part educated. He astonished some English officers who had been for years quartered in those regions by a knowledge very superior to that which they had acquired, not only respecting the history and antiquities of each island, but also as to its statistics and present state. It was amusing to see the little square-built, close-knit man with his dry ardour, modest confidence, and conscientious accuracy, interposing to correct any error into which they might fall while discussing such subjects. He lectures in modern Greek, reading the ancient also like his native tongue, as well as most of the European languages. He prophesies that what he calls the fifth great attack on the

liberty and civilisation of Europe will one day be made by the Russians; but he thinks that it will be frustrated, and end in the breaking up of that great empire.

At Zante I was only able to pass a single night. A glance is enough to prove that it deserves its Italian title "Fior di Levante." It consists, mainly, of a vast and rich plain cultivated with currants, and abruptly terminated by a picturesque mountain-ridge. The Ionian Islands are worthy of their fame, and our love, if beauty constitutes worth. They were successively the resting-places of Themistocles, Aristotle, Alexander, Augustus, and Germanicus. Antony and Cleopatra also sailed by them in their golden galleys before the battle of Actium. Their political history is full of interest. The contests of Corcyra with Corinth, the parent city of that colony, were long and memorable, and, on a smaller scale, exhibited perhaps as much heroism as was displayed in the American war of independence, with not a little of the same motives on both sides. And yet Corfu

will always be remembered, chiefly in association with the Homeric legend of Ulysses; nor shall I be the last traveller to wander along its sylvan shores, from creek to creek, in search of the exact spot where Nausicaa, modest and bold, first lifted up her eyes, full of wonder and pity, on the shipwrecked man whom she led to her father's palace.

From Zante I sailed for Patras in an English steamer, and have seldom been more amused than by the contrast between English manners and those of the islanders among whom I had been lately sojourning. The unceremonious vivacity of the Greeks makes even a lively Frenchman look dull by comparison. Judge then of my astonishment when I found myself in the midst of Englishmen, and of Englishmen recently come from home. I could never sufficiently admire their sublime tranquillity, or, rather, that wonderful *vis inertiæ*, which seemed sufficient of itself to keep the ship steady in a storm, and which would, no doubt, have made even sea-sickness a dignified condition. I gazed

almost with awe at their smooth-brushed hats, which the Egean breezes hardly dared to ruffle, —their unblemished coats, and immaculate boots, on which several of them gazed more attentively than they would have done at the Leucadian rock. Happen what might, their magnanimous indifference to all chances and changes, not connected with business or duty, preserved them from "all astonishment." Had a whale risen close beside us and spouted its foam in their faces, they would, I believe, have contented themselves with observing that "it was not in good taste." To one of them I spoke, by way of experiment, of Sappho's leap and the Leucadian rock; "Yes," he replied, "I have heard that it was the scene of a distressing accident." I must say, however, in justice to my new acquaintances, that they appeared thorough gentlemen. In antiquities they were far indeed from being versed; but in the principles, ancient but ever young, of patriotic duty and honour they had, probably, little to learn.

CHAPTER II.

FROM PATRAS TO ATHENS.

Missolonghi—Patras—An Albanian Guide—Antiquities—Scenery between Patras and Vostizza—Lepanto—Territory of the Achaian League—English and Greek Mountains—Site of Sicyon—Ancient Remains—Robbers—Character of our Albanian Guide—Corinth—The Acropolis of Corinth—Ruins of Temples—The Fountain of Peirenè—Callimachi—Arrival before Athens.

STRANGE memories, and something more than memories, seemed to stir within me, as, leaving the islands behind, we drew near to the ancient Hellas, and saw the white mountains of the Morea, at one side, shining above a long line of mist, and right before us, those that border the "immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight." The first record, however, which met the eye was not an ancient one. As we glided past Missolonghi we thought—who would not?—of Byron. Nowhere else does one feel so much in charity with him. His fate will long impart an interest to a place which would otherwise not

possess much to attract notice. Missolonghi is a long, straggling, white village, surrounded by marshes, and backed with fine mountains. Passing it by, we reached Patras. The town is picturesquely situated at the base of a high mountain during a large part of the year covered with snow, and is surrounded in every direction by lofty hills. Two vast headlands of bare rock —blocks apparently about 2000 feet high—slope opposite to it down into the bay, which is completely locked in by the Ionian Islands. The situation of Patras is beautiful, even to those who have seen Corfu. The town, which is a tolerably thriving one, contains several wide streets, most of the houses being new, and many of them well-built. I amused myself walking up and down the principal street, looking at the Greek and Albanian boys, who sat at work in their booths at each side, with legs crossed in the Turkish fashion. As the stranger passed, they lifted their quick black eyes, in rapid inquest, from their occupation, which generally consisted in the embroidery of coloured slippers

and all sorts of gay apparel. Those boys were characterised not only by extraordinary delicacy of feature, but by a girlish expression of grace, alertness, and vivacity.

I had intended to have taken a boat for Corinth, but the wind proved unfavourable. As I stood in doubt, a young Albanian, clad in the close-fitting vest, white skirt, and scarlet shoes of his country, stepped up to me with a gay and graceful familiarity, and without actually tapping me on the shoulder, accosted me, after a brief but decorous salutation, as if we had been acquaintances all our lives. An English gentleman, he informed me, was in the same difficulty as myself, and had just decided on taking horses and riding to Corinth. He was himself engaged as a courier and travelling servant, (to the extraordinary good fortune, as he assured me, of his master,) and I could not do better than join the party. The splendid attire and marvellous beauty of the man, who combined the features of his country's sculptured divinities with the wild grace of a young panther, might

have dazzled me into obedience, had I hesitated. I was, however, well pleased with the proposal, and still more so after I had made acquaintance with the travelling companion I had so opportunely met. After forming our plans and ordering our horses, I found that I had still a few hours to devote to Patras, and availed myself of it by taking a solitary walk into the country.

Just beyond the modern town, and higher up the hill, extends the old village,—for one can hardly call it by a more dignified title,—which formerly bore the name of Patras. It consists chiefly of mud hovels, each connected with its little garden-plot, but all as confusedly mingled and as ill combined, as if the village had just been shaken out of a bag. Higher still, there stands a venerable old castle of the middle ages, the strong walls of which sustained many a siege during the war of independence, but always repulsed the assailant. It is of a vast size, and in its base some blocks that belonged to the ancient Acropolis

are to be observed. Within a niche in one of its walls I remarked a statue which had suffered from the guns of the besiegers; but the fortress is still tolerably perfect, and derives an interest from its situation as well as from its fortunes. Not far off is an object as venerable as the castle itself, and perhaps as old,—a plane-tree of enormous dimensions, probably not less than thirty feet in circumference. It towers aloft in solitary grandeur, without a compeer or a companion, except a few almond-trees, the very impersonation of vegetable youth and flexile grace. About a quarter of a mile higher up the mountain-side are some picturesque arches mantled in ivy, the remains of a Roman aqueduct. Near the sea, there are also vestiges of an ancient temple, the only one, not obliterated, of all which Patras boasted of old.

The associations of Patras are of a composite character, combining Greek and Roman records. I do not know that this circumstance adds to its interest: on the contrary, I have generally found that such cross influences neutralise each

other, and that the imagination is most deeply affected by an impression which, however slight, is homogeneous. In one respect Patras resembled Rome itself; it was a great receiver of stolen goods. When Augustus, for the purpose of making Patras a great commercial centre, colonised it afresh, he brought thither, as a matter of course, not only large numbers of men from the various cities of Greece, but with them those associates, without whom a Greek never felt at his ease or in good company; I mean the statues of the gods and the heroes. Patras thus became one of the most splendid cities of Greece; but it has retained little of its ill-gotten prey. Its temples and its statues have vanished; how—we can but guess. I am often tempted to wish that all Greece, when its long and bright day was over, had met the fate of Pompeii; and that, as a whole country cannot be preserved inviolate under a glass case, a friendly shower of ashes had afforded the required protection. Such a wish includes, of course, the condition, that the covering of ashes had been destined to melt

away in our own time, like a veil of winter snow. What a radiant apparition of temples and statues would in that case emerge from the darkness, and astonish our modern eyes!

In the afternoon of the next day, we started on our expedition, and a singular cavalcade we made, our horses being among the most degenerate descendants of the "tempest-fresh-footed steeds," celebrated in Pindaric song, while those which served to carry our luggage were shabbier still. Behind us trudged a noisy rout—our guides and the proprietors of our horses. The way from Patras to Corinth (road there is none) delighted me by its beauty and its wildness. Our path generally followed the windings of the coast. At the opposite side of the gulf rose vast mountain ranges, the summits of which were veiled behind clouds so smooth and motionless as to look almost solid. I could easily imagine the old Greeks fancying their snowy tabernacles to be the habitation of gods. On our right hand, the mountains of the Morea stretched far away; but their peaks were generally hidden by the

interposition of their own lower ranges, which, in the earlier part of our pilgrimage, slanted up green to a considerable height, but, as we advanced, ascended in grey walls and bastions, and sometimes in more fantastic shapes. Often there was hardly room for our narrow and zig-zag path between the mountain bases and the sea. The ledges were plumed from steep to steep by a sort of grey pine, almost as flat-headed as a thorn, and not much larger; the interspaces between which were filled up by the dwarf cypress. We passed, as we rode on, occasional gaps in these mountain walls, perhaps a quarter of a mile wide; and looking far inland beheld, instead of ivied rocks, and great black caverns with the sea roaring at their portals, a quieter scene,—lonely glens discerned through narrowing vistas, and beyond them mountains rising range above range, their blue and their purple deepening through the various gradations of aerial distance, and the remoter of them shining, strongly yet placidly, with unyielding snow. For the most part, however, the

interval between the sea and the mountains could not have been less than two or three miles, the intervening space being covered with a vegetation more beautiful than any tree could afford, consisting of arbutus, dwarf holly, laurestinus, thyme, and oleander, all mingled and massed together in thickets, or rather in jungles. For leagues, as we traversed the wild, there was neither human being nor house in view; but the scene was not therefore dreary. All around us we heard the bleating of the lambs; and now and then we stopped to admire a tall white goat, (ragged as those tended by Pan himself,) rearing up, supported on his hind legs, with his head buried in an ivy-bush, or vainly endeavouring to extricate his venerable beard from the hollies.

We stopped for the night at a cottage which served as a sort of inn or halfway-house. It was not much inferior in appearance to the resting places you meet in the more retired parts of England; but certainly it was less amply stored with creature comforts. Our bedroom was a

loft over the stable. Fortunately it possessed a fire-place, otherwise we should have suffered much from cold, as even Greece can be cold in February,—and the moonlight shone clearly through the rafters of the roof. Beds there were none; and I doubt whether there is one to be found in the once luxurious Corinth. My capote, however,—a goat-skin cloak with a spreading hood,—kept me warm; indeed, even in the open air, the thick unpliant texture of a capote protects one like the walls of a house, and serves at once for raiment and habitation. It was late before I could persuade myself to retire to rest. The night was beautiful; and the little bay beside which we had taken up our abode, with its sands bright as silver and its ripples flashing above them; its bowers of oleander bending over the margin of the sea; its sea swelling up with dark glazed azure against the moonlight; the snow-capped mountains at the other side, and at their base the town of Lepanto—altogether formed a scene which it was difficult to quit. Nor was it the beauty of that

scene only, which prolonged my vigil far into the night. I do not in general feel much enthusiasm about battle-fields: but it would have been difficult to have gazed upon those waves of Lepanto without some recollection of the spectacle they witnessed when the banners inscribed with the Cross triumphed over the Crescent, and the Turkish ships, to the number of nearly two hundred, were sunk, burned, or captured by the Spanish, Genoese, and Papal fleets, under the command of John of Austria and John Andrew Doria. I retired at last to rest, just as the last embers of our fire were burning out; stretched myself on the floor, and with my carpet-bag as a pillow, slept soundly till morning.

The next day we rose early, and about six o'clock breakfasted—somewhat better than we should have done if we had not had the forethought to lay up a store of provision at Patras. We resumed our march and advanced, not very rapidly, encumbered as we were with our luggage-mules, along that coast line which in

old times constituted the territory of the Achaian league. The Achaian race, though during the palmy period of the Hellenic States it acquired but little celebrity, was assuredly one of the greatest of ancient Greece. It owed that greatness in the first instance to the quiet energy and wise abstinence with which, declining interference in most of the struggles between the rival Greek powers, it developed the large resources of its geographical situation, and matured its social system; and in the second place to the fact that it did not put forth its political strength till the other Hellenic races were in their decline. A fruit-tree placed in an ice-house can be made to keep its vegetative energies as it were in abeyance, and consequently to burst into blossom at an unusual period, when admitted to the privileges of light and air. Such seems to have been the political fortune of Achaia. While Athens and Sparta contended, it slept like a dormouse; and when their day was past, its sun rose. Few political revivals have taken place more remarkable than that of

Achaia, when the cities that had for so many years constituted the Achaian league sprang forth once more, banded against the tyranny which had so long oppressed them, and drove out the Macedonian garrisons. Unfortunately they did not trust wholly to themselves. In their career of victory they associated themselves with the Romans as allies, and fared, of course, as the Britons fared after they had accepted the aid of the Saxons. "Our allies should be our inferiors: an ally of equal or superior power being apt to turn out the most dangerous of enemies. The Romans came as friends, and remained as masters: the name of Achaia was extended over Greece, and Achaia became but name. Not few, however, and not unimportant are the lessons it has bequeathed.

We rode on all day, the sea at our left hand, and on our right that noble chain of mountains, not less than 7000 feet in height, including among them the far-famed Erymanthus and "Cyllene hoar," which separated of old the enterprising and maritime Achaia from the recluse

and unchanging Arcadia. Towards sunset we arrived at Vostizza, where we remained for the night. We passed the evening exploring the orange and lemon groves which decorate and sweeten its neighbourhood. Like Patras, Vostizza is an improving place, but it includes some signs of prosperity which it might perhaps dispense with, such as public places of a very humble sort devoted to billiards and cards. An inn or a bed was, however, out of the question. Vostizza stands on the site of the ancient Ægium, the place of assembly, after the destruction of Helicè, of the cities belonging to the Achaian league. Near the temple of the Panachæan Ceres was the sacred grove of Jupiter, in which, year after year, the deputies met. No remains now exist either of the temple or of the city. The next day we continued our journey, with the glorious range of Parnassus right opposite us at the other side of the gulf. Gazing at its luminous crest I could not help thinking, as I called to mind Wordsworth's lines,—

> "What was the great Parnassus' self to thee,
> Mount Skiddaw?"

that the venerable bard had in this instance exhibited more of patriotic sentiment than of that profound appreciation of nature which characterises his poetry more than any other existing. Many Skiddaws would not make one Parnassus in bulk; and in perfection of outline and beauty of position there can still less be a comparison between them. The English mountains are indeed worthy of all love and honour; they may boast even a characteristic beauty of their own, different in kind from that of the Alps, the Apennines, and the Greek Highlands: their sylvan slopes and pastoral valleys ranged over by pacific herds, and thick-set with orchards, gardens, and happy homesteads, touch the heart with a deep moral pathos; and the small scale of the scenery often gives a peculiar beauty of detail to the woody and indented coast against which the ripple of the lake bursts, breaking its bubble upon briar and bramble; but so far as sublimity or the severer order of beauty is concerned, they can enter into no comparison with the mountains of the south. The difference

between mountain ranges one half of which remains above the line of perpetual snow and the bases of which are blackened with pine-forests, and mountains which are turf to the summit, is simply the difference between poetry and poetical prose. After gazing on the vast precipices of the Alps, after watching their aspiring peaks, and long barrier, (ridge or spine,) of crag and ice, staying the tempest and dividing north from south, the comparatively shapeless bulk of not a few among our English and Scotch mountains, with their soft, spongy surface, and vacillating, compromising outline, seems absolutely carnal in character. They are of the earth, earthy. However, there are so many different sorts of mountain beauty, as well as of beauty in the vales and plains, that no rivalry need be feared if none be provoked.

Towards evening one of our guides pointed to a circular flat-headed hill which stood at our right hand, about two miles off, a little in advance of the mountain chain: on its summit, as he explained to us through our interpreter,

there stands a small village occupying the site of an ancient city. That hill was the Acropolis of the ancient Sicyon, one of the most important cities of the Achaian league. A theatre, of which the seats were carved in the rock, and a stadium, also hollowed out of the hill-side, still remain; but these are all the traces which exist of a city once so celebrated for its temples and its countless statues, a city which boasted one of the most celebrated schools of Grecian art. These slight remains of Sicyon are the only memorials now existing of the twelve great cities which lined the southern coast of the gulf, and constituted the Achaian confederation—a confederation which, as well as the Ionian league that preceded it in the same region, exhibited on a smaller scale that type after which the whole social organisation of Greece was formed.

We procured accommodation for the night in a little village of which I have forgotten the name. What was the exact nature of that accommodation I need not specify in detail, for, of all forms which egotism can assume,

the most offensive is surely that of a traveller who solemnises the apotheosis of dinners and breakfasts, and commends mine host's over-charge to eternal fame. We ate, I dare say, a bad dinner; but as the peasants of Greece, who are contented with a handful of olives and a crust of bread, certainly could not have pitied us, it is to be hoped that we took the hint, and spent no immoderate degree of compassion on ourselves. More than once on moor and mountain and in forest depths I have had to endure no inconsiderable degree of hunger, but I have never found myself much the worse for it; and assuredly one of the benefits we should derive from travelling is an emancipation from the bondage of comforts—a term under which we commonly include multitudes of things which in old time would have been luxuries unattainable by kings. The splendours and pageantries of wealth, the velvet hangings, and palatial homes of regal state make, I am convinced, a less dangerous, because a less insidious, appeal to the sensual and vain-glorious instincts of men, than

one half of those things which we speak of as "mere necessaries" absolutely essential to comfort and respectability.

From an undue devotion to creature comforts, at least, the light-hearted people among whom we sojourned were exempt: under our windows they kept up all sorts of games during the evening; among other things, firing at a target, and playing cards. The latter, I admit, is not by any means a respectable occupation, especially for a peasantry—who ought never to ape the vices of their betters; and if you should be disposed to infer that where industrialism is deficient, reckless habits are likely to be in excess, and that a very light-hearted people may find it a little difficult to keep their feet steadily in the path of duty, I am not prepared to deny the assertion. The Greeks, like the other southern races, may require to "carry weight" when they ride the race of life; but if they can only manage to borrow that salutary load from a sense of duty rather than from indigestion and a dyspeptic hatred of mirth,

so much the better for them, and for those who associate with them. I have seen enough of them to know that the planet Mercury has still some magnetic influence on the tides within their veins. May that sacred influence make their songs and their mirth to abound; and may some other stellar influence, not less sacred, in conjunction with it, cause them to keep their hands from illicit familiarity with my luggage. The regions through which we had been travelling abounded with robbers. During the preceding day in a narrow pass beside the sea, we came upon some armed men who looked of very dubious character, and who apparently thought no better of us, for they eyed us rather sharply. My friend's Albanian servant, the commander of our party, drew to one side a tall and handsome fellow who seemed to be the leader of the band, and held him in conversation for a few minutes as we rode by. On his rejoining us I asked him what he had been saying to his companion. "Only giving him a little money to buy powder," was his reply.

"Who is he?" I rejoined. "A robber," answered our trusty guide; "I have known him many years." On my expressing some solicitude on the subject of our portmanteaus, he begged of me to be at rest, for that everything was "quite right." "No danger with me," he exclaimed, slapping his embroidered vest; "all men my friends safe—toujours—no danger—niente—I an army—I a fleet!" On my persisting in inquiries which he plainly considered indelicate, he sprang from the ground, to the great peril of his red leather slippers (contriving, however, whether he leaped or walked, to pick his steps, and avoid all except the flat stones), and exclaimed: "How much franks, how much danari have you in your sac-de-nuit?" "About £50," I replied. Upon which he informed me that the clothes in his trunk were worth at least £100, and asked whether I seriously believed that he would expose his valuable property to any danger of pillage. His statement rather surprised me at the time; but afterwards it struck me

as very likely to be true, for whatever money he made he immediately invested in some new chain or piece of gold lace.

The next day at about three in the afternoon, we had arrived, as I fancied, within half an hour's ride of Corinth; for the sun shining full upon it, though hidden from our eyes by a cloud, and reflected back upon us through the pure atmosphere of Greece, brought out every feature of the town with such discriminating touches, that distance was practically abolished. On however we travelled hour after hour, and still we had not reached our place of destination. Our way was lengthened by the interposition of several rivers flowing from their mountain glens into the sea, the fords of which were not always easily passed; and of course in no case was anything like a bridge to be found. On one occasion, after forcing our way for a considerable distance through the oleander thickets which almost choked up the wide gravelly space which the winter floods had added to the river's bed, we

came to a stream winding rapidly seaward, the depth of which sorely perplexed us. One of our guides, bolder than the rest, pushed his mule into the water at the shallowest place he could find. The animal, as I soon perceived, carried the precious portmanteau of our Albanian guide. The quick eye of Elias had made the discovery sooner still, and he called on the man to stop. His appeal not being at once attended to, he pulled out a pistol, and pointed it at the recusant, who lost as little time as possible in returning. "What would you have done," I said, "if he had gone on?" "I shoot him dead," was the reply, "he float down to the sea, and no one know; what harm?" I think he would have kept his word. Nothing, however, could be more obliging and good-humoured than his general demeanour; he never was tired of singing songs, and telling us stories of his adventures in various parts of the East, for he had been a great traveller. We were perpetually amused by the vivacity with which he remarked on everything that occurred, and the shameless-

ness with which he praised himself for his sense, spirit and address, whether shown in defeating a plot or in telling a lie. Whatever he might do, he was alike proud of the achievement; and sometimes put me in mind of the Homeric heroes, who, if they had no victory to glory in, boasted that "their swift feet had delivered them from black death and hateful Orcus." Never have I seen a fellow of a nobler presence. He might have supplied a sculptor with a model for an Apollo: his hands were as finely made as a woman's, his features were perfectly symmetrical, his black piercing eye had that roundness which, in the ancient fresco of the head of Achilles, so marvellously unites the expression of human intellect with the audacious passion of the animal, and his step seemed to spurn the earth it trod on. His language was a strange jargon of all tongues. Why we did not speak modern Greek he could not understand. Wherever he went, as he assured us, at the end of a week, he spoke the language "faster than the natives." That he spoke it well enough to

be understood I do not doubt, for he was always ready to try at anything; and as my friend and I conversed, I observed that his quick eye glanced from us at the objects we regarded, suggesting to him, no doubt, the names of those objects.

During the whole of our day's ride, we had hardly met a house or human being; at sunset, however, passing through an olive wood, we came upon a party of peasants. The red beams of the sinking luminary shone through the old stems and twisted branches upon their gay attire, and broke on the shallow pools, left behind by the winter rains, in which their forms were reflected. As we rode by, I could not but remark a certain air of disquiet and trouble which characterised the party. One woman stood a little apart from the rest, gazing intently into a wooden vessel which she held in her hands; the others conversed eagerly. The curiosity of our Albanian, Elias (the second syllable of his name is pronounced short) was at once excited, and he rode up to her. On rejoining our party he told us that a man in

the neighbourhood was ill, and that his wife with some friends were consulting auguries in order to ascertain whether he would live or die. As far as I could understand the process of inquiry they had broken a raw egg into a vessel of water, and the fate of the sick man depended on the mode in which the yolk floated or sank. Elias would commit himself to no opinion on the subject. Old observances he held in much reverence; but he indemnified himself by professing marvellously liberal opinions on moral questions. Persons who had seen as much of the world as he had, were free from all prejudice, as he assured us, and full of all wisdom. He was fond of appealing to the old philosophers o Greece, of whom he knew nothing but the names, and affirmed that they were infallible authorities on all subjects, and thought exactly as he did. Imagine a Harlequin-Socrates, or an Autolycus-Phocion! Perhaps, after all, that only means—imagine Alcibiades.

About six o'clock in the evening we reached Corinth. The modern town (village it should

rather be called) is situated in the midst of ruins, most of them ruins made such by the late war. Among them rise a few Roman walls; but of all the magnificent buildings that once adorned the wealthiest of the Grecian cities, the only memorial is a single temple, to what divinity dedicated no one knows, which crowns a gentle eminence. Five fluted columns alone remain standing; and around them lie fragments of the frieze and cornice so vast in size, that one can hardly guess either how they were lifted to their station, or how, once lifted, they were ever thrown down. Corinth was the Tyre of Greece. Situated between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, connected thus with the eastern and western seas, and the resting-place of all who passed from the mainland of Greece to the Peloponnesus and *vice versâ*, Corinth rapidly became wealthy and dissolute. It was early eminent for its arts also, especially for those that minister to luxury: in it, the nobler arts, however, likewise flourished. When the Roman Consul,

Mummius, had taken Corinth by assault, he desired to adorn his triumph with its spoils; and accordingly issued a proclamation commanding his soldiers to spare the works of art, and enforcing his edict with the threat that "if any soldier broke a statue, he should make another himself!" The anecdote illustrates the comparative appreciation of art among the Greeks, and among that people who conquered the world—in part perhaps, because they were too stupid to do any better. Its situation would have rendered Corinth, I cannot but think, the most suitable position for the capital of the modern kingdom. Had the metropolis been placed there, one good effect would at least have followed. The antiquities of Athens would have been left in their sacred seclusion, or might have become the ornaments of a grave university city, unvulgarised by the associations of a metropolis. Had such an arrangement been adopted Corinth could hardly have failed to be the seat of a considerable trade before this time. In that case also

steamers would long since have plied between Patras and Corinth. In one of them I should probably have embarked, for few people are wise enough to use, without abusing, the modern facilities for travelling. I should then have lost a delightful ride of four days—and you would have escaped my tedious narrative.

Just above the city of Corinth (so let us call it, in deference to its ancient fame) rises its far-famed Acropolis, the most stately, majestic, and complete piece of Nature's architecture which I have seen in any part of the world. It is one vast rock which, in some points of view almost regular enough to look like a work of art, towers up with its well-squared precipices to a height of nearly two thousand feet (about two-thirds the height of Helvellyn) the tabular platform at its summit being large enough to support a city. It commands probably the noblest view in Greece, except those which expand beneath the higher acclivities of Delphi. That view, simple at once and ornate, and as ample as it is beautiful, extends over the

most interesting portions of Hellas. On one side lies the Egean, with the Bay of Salamis, Egina, and many a glistening island; on the other, the Gulf of Lepanto, a lake eighty miles long, into which descend, from the south, the mountains of the Morea, and from the north, in marvellous perspective, the ranges of Parnassus, Helicon, and Citheron. Those mountains I had been gazing at for several days in succession; but thus looking upon them from a height about the fourth part of their own, the effect was incomparably finer, the loss of elevation produced by foreshortening being obviated.

On the summit of the Corinthian Acropolis lie the ruins of houses, churches, and mosques, burned during the war; and in two places, amid this Babylonian confusion, there still recline a few snow-white pillars belonging to two temples, one of them supposed to have been the Temple of Venus. Ruined as they are, they look perfect still in ruin, from their faultless and satisfactory completeness of proportion, their unviolated purity of tint, their beauty of

texture and unblunted perfection of detail, which could hardly have been surpassed by an artist sculpturing the form of that divinity to which one of them was dedicated. Neither moss nor lichen assails them, and even the ground-ivy reverently abstains from them. At the eastern side of the summit, that side first greeted by the morning salutation of the God who dwelt within sight, at Delphi, is a fountain. Above the dark pure water the rock is carved into the likeness of a temple seen from one end, with architrave and antæ; and all round are inscriptions, the vows, no doubt, of votaries. That fountain is Peirenè, the spring at which Pegasus was drinking when caught by Bellerophon. From this aerial summit he soared above the Egean:—lest I should share the fate of the hero, and fall "headlong through the fields of air," I shall rein in all unnecessary enthusiasm, and leave you to believe in the Horse of the Muses or not, as you please. It is not wholly a question of inclination—without the Muse no one can believe in their "winged steed."

Remembering that a long journey lay before us, we left the summit of the Acropolis many hours earlier than we should otherwise have done, and made the long and toilsome descent to the plain. Descending from the crest of the hill, we reached the outer enclosure, passed through a gate and ancient tower which guards it, and, in succession, passed some other towers and another gate, a battery, and a fortress, and at last reached the first gate and the draw-bridge which connects the walled enclosure with the path which winds down along the craggy ledges to the plain. There exist a few other vestiges of antiquity, besides those I have named, in the neighbourhood of Corinth; about a quarter of a mile from it, and at the eastern side, for example, remains an amphitheatre, of which a few steps, excavated in the rock, still are traced. At the distance of about seven miles, and near the Saronic Gulf, is the Isthmian plain, which still preserves some inconsiderable traces of its ancient stadium as well as of a theatre. Not far distant are memorials of a later

age, and of a very different state of society; the excavations of the canal by which Nero endeavoured to cut through the Isthmus of Corinth. The same enterprise is spoken of still as desirable, but I suspect that the Isthmus of Panama will be cut through first. Hercules, on a memorable occasion, divided a wall of mountain for the purpose of draining a lake; and many additional comments will be written on his heroic labours, explaining them in a philosophical, a historical, and an industrial sense, before a people so versatile and so eloquent as the Greeks, labour perseveringly, and labour in combination, on a great utilitarian work.

Late in the evening we arrived at Callimachi, a little port on the Saronic Gulf, and the ordinary place of embarkation for Athens. We immediately hired a boat; but till midnight the wind was pronounced unfavourable, and I was obliged to while away the time, lying on a bench near the shore, and sleeping when the songs of the boatmen permitted sleep. About twelve

o'clock we cast loose; but the Sea Powers had not been duly propitiated, and though we sailed all night, and all the next day, it was not till evening that we approached the Peiræus. Again the wind fell, and it became but too plain that it was only by the greatest efforts that we could reach the harbour before nine o'clock, the latest hour at which people are allowed to land. The sailors who calculated on a good buonamano, furled their sails, and pulled lustily with their oars; while our brilliant Albanian, who, finding nothing to amuse him, had slept during the whole of the day, came up to me clapping his hands and exclaiming, "You sleep tranquil at Athens to-night. You eat roast-beef—plenty. You much comfortable. You see my fine clothes to-morrow." Vehemently did he adjure the sailors to row hard, alternately threatening them, and making them promises. We had arrived within a few yards of the harbour-mouth, when the signal-gun pealed. Poor Elias ground his teeth, muttered "Sacresti," and in another moment, without further observation, folded his cloak about him,

lay down on the deck, and composed himself to sleep. I could not follow his example. We had at last arrived at Athens, and yet were not allowed to tread her soil. For some hours I watched the lights on the shores of the Peiræus. A few ships were moored near us, and now we heard a chain rattle, and now the rigging strain. A light burned in the prow of a fishing-boat further off; and a laugh and a song come to us by fits across the dim and glassy sea. Every sound was significant, and the silence that succeeded the last seemed the suspended breath of expectation. Exhausted at last, I lay down on the stones in the bottom of the boat, and in a few minutes was asleep. I woke early in the morning, and rose at once. The cold, pale lights of dawn lay in streaks and flakes on the pearly main, and mildly and sadly revealed the green hill that cut it, leaving the remoter landscape in a gentle gloom. Athens was invisible, but not its crown. Fronting the dawn, and relieved against a dark sky, stood the Acropolis and the Parthenon.

CHAPTER III.

THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.

Relation of the Acropolis to Athens—Dimensions of the Acropolis—The Walls of Themistocles—The Propylea—The Temple of "Victory without Wings"—The Parthenon—The Panathenaic Procession—Fragmentary Sculpture.

You will easily believe that my first visit at Athens, was to the Acropolis. As Athens was the intellectual centre, and remains to this day the great exponent of Greece, so was the Acropolis, crowned with its votive temples and commemorative sculptures, the high imaginative embodiment of Athens itself. It was Athens idealised; exhibited as it lived in the imagination of an Athenian, and as it has survived in the heart of the world. Whatever existed in the city below stood revealed in a more glorious unity, and free from all encumbering pettiness of detail, in the city above. There Art was represented by the noblest works of Phidias. There

war was represented by the defensive Propylea, the Minerva Promachos, and the golden shields with which (the offerings of successive conquerors returning from many a well-fought field) the eastern end of the Parthenon was adorned. There commerce was represented in the sacred Treasury, included within the walls of the Parthenon. There the most sacred traditions and religious affections were represented; for there, amid other memorials, was the olive-tree which rose out of the earth at the command of Minerva, when she contended in rivalship with Neptune;—the mystic plant, parent of every tree that supplied the home of each Athenian with its frugal repast, or lighted the lamp beside his hearth. It was thus that everything great and noble at Athens found a representative in the aerial city that crowned the Acropolis: but on that sacred height there was no demagogue feeding the people with wind; no judicial tribunal commending the hemlock-cup to the lips of Socrates; no populace sending Themistocles into banishment; no idlers enquiring for

"some new thing," when a man of Macedon was dictating terms to Athens and to Greece. The pictures of the middle ages are frequently divided into two compartments, a terrestrial and a celestial, and the deeds enacted in the lower division by men yet in the flesh, are contemplated from above by a company of Spirits assoiled from the taint of mortality. It was thus that the Acropolitan Athens kept watch from its region of peace, over the Athens of the plain. Its marble gods, demigods, and heroes constituted the chorus that looked down upon the drama acted from day to day beneath their feet, and approved or disapproved.

Knowing that the lesser ever receives its interpretation from the greater, I resolved to make myself well acquainted with the treasures of the Acropolis before I explored the rest of Athens. I would advise every traveller to adopt the same course, but to do so at his leisure, not allowing his imagination to become unduly excited, or his spirits to be flurried. The great art of seeing things in travel consists in the management

of the mind. If we visit an interesting spot without having read or thought enough about it to render the mind apprehensive, we either miss its historical interest altogether, or are reduced to study our guide book, when we should be looking around us, and to learn our lesson instead of enjoying our feast. If on the other hand we have thought over the matter too eagerly, and too often, the reality is sure to fall short of our expectation.

Experience had taught me many such lessons as these; and when I set out for the Acropolis it was with a firm resolution of turning my back upon it at the last moment, if any unlucky chance seemed likely to interfere with a leisurely inspection of it. How often has a sharp wind, a shower of rain, a deficiency of time, or an idle and troublesome companion, prevented a traveller from being able to profit by an opportunity never again to be offered! The worst calamity perhaps which can happen to him, is that of falling in with an exploring party, who have already spread their luncheon in the

midst of the ruins—cold meat and warm wine, and English porter at three shillings a bottle! When such a disaster occurs, a speedy retreat on the part of the intruder is the only remedy. On this occasion however everything turned out propitiously. The wind which the day before had been chilled by the snows of the mountains, came from the sea, fresh at once and warm. The spring flowers were already rising in thick tufts on the grassy slopes, including most of those which grow in our gardens, and everything told me that the hour was auspicious.

If there existed nothing worth seeing in Greece except the Acropolis of Athens, and if the way thither were a wilderness, it would still be one of the spots on earth most worthy of a pilgrimage. It might indeed be better never to see it than to see it only once or twice, and with feelings as tumultuous as under such circumstances would naturally be those of a man treading the ground trodden of old by the greatest Poets, Philosophers, Orators, and Statesmen whom the world has ever seen. To wander

there repeatedly, however, to enjoy a silence broken but by voices from the past, to idle there and then to explore, to sleep there in the sunshine and to waken suddenly, to forget where you are and to be accidentally reminded of it by the first object on which your eye rests, to see your own old thoughts rising up from behind prostrate pillar or broken frieze, and beckoning you on toward a company of better thoughts but half your own—this is to visit the Acropolis, and for this few efforts would be too great.

I will begin my description of the Acropolis in a very prosaic way, namely by stating its dimensions. It is an oval hill which ascends to the height of about two hundred feet, the summit being a thousand feet long by half that breadth. At two thirds of the elevation the green sod ceases, and in its place the rock rises perpendicularly like a rampart, until it blends with the walls of the fortress. The stones of those walls are so large as to harmonise with the masses of rock that support them; but they are too carefully wrought to allow of your mistaking them for

rock. I was much impressed on observing in the wall at one side of the Acropolis, fragments of fluted columns, inserted as building stones, as well as pieces of cornice, triglyphs and metopes, with here and there, broken fragments of sculpture. We are reminded of men more vividly by the accidental obstacles with which they had to contend than by the labours which, without let or hindrance, embodied designs conceived in the stillness of thought. Themistocles was brought before me with the strength of reality as my eye fell on this part of the fortress, and I remembered that he had been compelled by the necessities of the time to build in haste, using as materials whatever came to hand, especially the fragments of the temple of Minerva, overthrown by the Persians, and replaced by the Parthenon. The greatest works of human genius have thus been ever in part extempore and occasional works. They have been rooted in the need of the hour, though their blossom renews itself from year to year; and to the end of time with their philosophical or

artistic worth an historical interest is blended. Men of ambitious imaginations retire into their study and devise some "*magnum opus*" which, like the world itself, is to be created out of nothing, and to hang self-balanced on its own centre :—after much puffing, however, the world which they produce is apt to turn out but a well-sized bubble. Men of another order labour but to provide for some practical need; and their work, humble, perhaps occasional in its design, is found to contain the elements that make human toils indestructible. Homer sang, no doubt, in part to kindle patriotism among his countrymen, in part to amuse his village audience, and in part to procure a good night's lodging, as he wandered on Grecian and Asiatic shores; but the great Idea of his song was stout enough notwithstanding to fight its way through all obstructions, and to orb itself out into completeness. Shakespeare wrote in part for practical objects of a less elevated nature; Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity was intended to compose the strifes of the time; and Burke's great work on the French

Revolution was but thrown out as a bastion to protect the British citadel from French jacobinism; although, working in haste and prodigal of his wealth, he inserted into it many a passage of poetry or philosophy too good for its place—passages in one sense as misapplied as the fragments of sculpture in the wall of Themistocles.

After mounting a long but not a steep ascent, I reached the Propylea, or entrance to the fortress. This building was raised a little more than half a century after the battle of Marathon, and was intended by Pericles simply to serve as a defensive gate to the interior of the citadel; but the genius of its architect, Mnesicles, rendered it a structure hardly less remarkable than the Parthenon itself. The summit of the former building is on a level with the base of the latter. Stuart has represented it very correctly in his drawings, and Colonel Leake not less so in his description; though I believe that both of them were indebted for their knowledge of the building exclusively to

Pausanias, whose account of it was, fortunately, minute. It is certain, at least, that at the conclusion of the war, not a stone of the Propylea was visible; indeed, the labourers had dug four feet through the rubbish before they reached the cornice and capitals. This building consists of a Doric portico, sixty feet wide, the columns, which are six in number, being about thirty feet high. Behind them,—not parallel to them, however, but placed at right angles, and stationed at each side of the way into the interior,—is a range of Ionic pillars. The portico is flanked by two buildings, nearly square, projecting considerably in advance of it, and built likewise of Pentelican marble. These buildings were originally picture-galleries, and the paintings of Polygnotus adorned their storied walls. What would we not give to be able to restore but one of those pictures and compare it with the specimens of ancient painting disinterred at Pompeii? The rubbish so long accumulated about the Propylea has, in one respect, discharged as friendly an office as the lava, to which

we are indebted for the conservation of so much at Herculaneum; it has preserved for its columns and ruined walls a purity of whiteness absolutely dazzling, when the sun shines upon them. Those columns are nearly perfect. Around them lie fragments of their capitals, as well as of the architrave and frieze, the vast size of which imparts to them a character of imposing grandeur. One of them, which I measured, is twenty-five feet in length; and though it belonged to the summit of the building, its minutest details are finished with a perfection which would have wearied a Chinese carver in ivory.

A little to the right of the Propylea, and on a platform slightly elevated, stands another Temple, that of the "Wingless Victory," released from darkness, like a captive set free, since the conclusion of the war. Pericles built this small but exquisite structure on the Acropolis, to intimate that the most wandering of the divinities had taken her permanent stand on that spot. A boast is commonly made better in spoken words than in written, and should, least

of all, be written in a material so intractable and unchangeable as marble: notwithstanding, Pericles, if he were called to account, would be able to make a good defence; for Athens succeeded in raising an empire, the only terrestrial one which has proved permanent, and one which daily pushes its frontiers further out—that of Mind. The wingless Victory enjoyed a prospect which might have atoned to her for the loss of her plumes. She gazed right over the bay of Salamis, where, some forty years before, she had touched the fleet of Xerxes, in passing, with a flying hand; and she beheld the Island of Egina, in the caverns of which the Athenians had hidden their wives and children when they abandoned their capital. Contented she may have been; and yet when a wind much less rough as a wooer than that which carried off Orithyia, blew from the purple mountains of the Morea, and made the "wine-black" sea flash in the sun, the Goddess must sometimes have longed for her wings again, that she might cast herself upon it. Wheeler and Spon saw this

temple in the seventeenth century. At the time of Stuart it had so completely disappeared, that men doubted whether it had existed in modern times. The Archæological Society succeeded in ascertaining the exact spot specified by Pausanias, and, removing the rubbish, found almost every part of the temple perfect. It had been thrown down to make way for a Turkish battery; but no injury had been done to the fragments, and after a careful study of the plan, no difficulty was experienced in restoring the building. It consists of a small but beautifully proportioned cella, graced with four Ionic pillars at each end. Its frieze was decorated with sculptures commemorative of the battle of Marathon.

Leaving this temple to the right, I continued to advance, ascending along the ancient ground of the Acropolis, which is now laid bare. On I strayed among fallen capitals and fragments of columns bathed in the sunshine, many of them so large, that I could but just see over them, and not a few embossed with sculpture or covered with inscriptions. All around lay

triglyphs and metopes, trunks of centaurs, heads of horses, manes of lions, and among them the workers of the ruin—flattened cannon-balls, and splinters of Turkish shells. In a few moments I stood before the Parthenon. Its western front, the first part on which my eye rested, is almost wholly uninjured. The pillars are perfect, the architrave and cornice equally so; and a few of the sculptures between the triglyphs still remain. The pediment has sustained but little damage, and still retains possession of the two colossal statues which resisted all Lord Elgin's efforts to remove them. They formed a part of that great composition in which Phidias represented the contest of Minerva and Neptune for Athens,—a contest probably symbolical of a question which may one day have divided Athenian statesmen, namely, whether the State which they moulded ought to seek her supremacy at sea or by land. The group within the eastern pediment represented the birth of Minerva; and the ninety-two compartments of the frieze, which surrounded the temple, illus-

trated her achievements, and those of the early Athenian heroes whom she had guided and inspired. The character of Minerva was certainly the noblest conception of Greek religion. Whether we consider her mystical birth, as the glorious apparition proceeded all-perfect and mature from the head of the Father of Gods and men, her virgin estate, her serene valour resisting all aggression, or her sacred and practical wisdom, we trace in this mythic idea a faint approximation to one yet more exalted, that of the Christian Church as contemplated by the mind of early Christendom. That the Athenians should have chosen for their patroness a divinity with whose austere sanctitude they had, perhaps, less in common than with any other of the deities, is a remarkable instance of the fact that men admire most the qualities in which they are most deficient. Such however was the case. The Parthenon was so called from the Goddess to whom Athens and all it contained was dedicated, and means "the Temple of the Virgin."

Passing under the peristyle, you reach the cella or body of the temple, in the west end of which, the Athenian treasury was kept, while in the eastern end, or sanctuary, the colossal statue of the goddess, wrought by Phidias in ivory and gold, was enshrined. It was around this cella that the most beautiful of relievos, the Panathenaic procession, was ranged. Though we possess in the British Museum so large a part of it, another portion still holds its ground where it has a better right to be, and the western end of the cella, at least, continues undefrauded and inviolate. The members of the frieze which remain are exactly the same in spirit as those on which your eye rests every day that you are at home; and the hospitality which you had afforded to those strangers "from a far countree" made me feel, when I saw their companions, as if I were meeting old friends. There they stood as in the days of old, when their placid aspect tranquillised many a heart disquieted by the last news from the Peloponnesian war;—Priests

walking in procession with steps attuned to harmonies unheard by us;—venerable elders, and beautiful matrons seated in attributes of sedate repose, yet incapable of lassitude, calmly observant of the ceremonial, or engaged in slow but earnest converse;—warriors holding horses by the head, or balanced on them with a pliant grace, as though man and horse had constituted "Like the feigned Centaur, but one animal;—" youths dragging forward bulls that plant their feet resolutely before them, as if they smelt their own blood on the ground, and low against the skies;—little boys, modest, tractable, and orderly, who console themselves apparently for an unusual constraint, by a deep conviction that on their discretion, the success of the rite mainly depends;—and here and there

> "Shaggy goats that eye the mountain top
> Askance, and riot with reluctant horn."

I was interested by observing on the walls, in many places, the remains of the paint with which they were once adorned. It was at one time the fashion to extol the ancients for the

purity of their taste in contemning the coloured decorations which we moderns rejoice in. The fact has turned out, on more minute inquiry, to have been far otherwise. The Greeks were by no means purists; and though of course nothing that they produced was tawdry in effect, the greater portion of their temples was painted, both within and without, with a large variety of colours. Their idol-statues (those to which they attached peculiar religious honours at least) were also coloured in the hair, the eyes, and the dress. Such colouring however was, assuredly, no barbarous imitation of life, but aimed at an ideal effect; and probably, without being out of harmony with nature, it invested the image with a supernatural character, and struck the beholder with awe.

How lamentable that this temple, which for so many centuries had triumphed over time, should at last have been so mutilated and maimed! A single shell which fell upon its roof during the Venetian siege destroyed what ages

had spared; and though the two ends of the building and much of the sides are tolerably perfect, the centre part of the structure suffered in a moment what many a year will not restore. Among the ruins, as I roamed through the scene of devastation, lay a few fragments of the frieze, belonging, for the most part, to the southern side. Such remains, you will naturally suppose, broken as those beautiful sculptures commonly were, to have presented but a melancholy spectacle; the fact, however, was far otherwise, and this is assuredly not the least among the triumphs of the Phidian art. So profound was the serenity of expression which characterised these fragments of sculpture, that it seemed to accord equally with all fortunes. That tranquillity was not noticeable in the head only, but manifested itself, where the head no longer existed, in every limb and gesture; and the eternal repose of those shattered relics as they lay there in the sun, challenged rather envy than compassion. Fragmentary sculpture has its own especial value, and among the losses

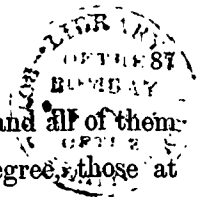
sustained by art, as in all other losses, the law of compensation prevails. What is thus lost in completeness is often gained in pathos. It is also to be remembered that the beauty of the human form in detail, is only to be appreciated when its different portions are presented to us separately. Under more fortunate circumstances the details are lost in the whole, and the head will not let the eye wander to the extremities.

The beauty of fragmentary sculpture was on this occasion singularly brought home to me by an accident. As I wandered about the Acropolis, I found, on a part where some remains had lately been dug up, a marble foot, which enchanted me by its perfection of form. Had it been the foot of the "silver-footed Goddess," who ran along the waves of the sea, it could not in its dazzling radiance and multitudinous curves have expressed a more winged lightness or a more pliant grace. As I gazed on it it seemed to reveal as much of physiognomic character as Lavater could have found in the countenance he had studied most minutely.

More than once I laid it down, and returned to it again, to indulge in one glance more. It gained upon me; the nymph-like foot gradually suggested the hand, and that again the curved and placid brow. Again and again I imagined what must have been the form which that benign, frank, joyous, and immaculate foot supported,—that foot which contained so much more than I ever before knew was to be found in a foot. I was obliged at last, by the interruption of some labourers, to lay aside both my reverie and that which had occasioned it. Mine, however, was not the only reverie that has rested on a slender foundation. Just such a foot is the world we inhabit, as revealed to our senses, and to our faculty conversant with sense. Our philosophers are very prompt to draw inferences as to the whole, from that lower portion of the moral world which stands upon the level of their apprehension; but, until the delineations which they draw resemble each other, I suppose we shall always doubt as to the authenticity

of that complete image which they so fluently describe.

After examining the Parthenon in detail, I contemplated it often from a distance, and with an admiration ever increasing. There is a simple and unpresuming majesty in those grave Doric temples, which sinks more deeply into the mind the more steadily we regard them. The perfection of their proportions is also such as a transient or careless glance will not detect. Few persons, for this reason, are aware of one important circumstance, to which the ancient temple owed much of that complete and satisfactory beauty which pleases even those who have not discovered the cause of their pleasure, and the absence of which gives a harsh, raw, mechanic aspect to many a building intended to be an exact copy of it. I allude to the circumstance that its outlines, instead of being rectilinear, are, in a very slight degree, curvilinear. On closely studying the Parthenon I observed that in base and cornice alike there is at each side a slight elevation toward the centre. Every



pillar swells also at its middle, and all of them bend also inwards in a slight degree, those at the corners slanting diagonally toward the centre of the building. In the whole temple, in fact, which thus leans in on itself and slightly swells upward, there is not a single perfectly straight line. It was with Greek architecture as with Greek poetry;—there was, in each, a perfection of proportion which is felt rather than seen, and which defies the imitation of those who can only measure mechanically with plummet and square. The Madeleine of Paris is no more a Greek temple than a tragedy of Racine is a tragedy of Sophocles.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS.

Temple of Minerva Polias—The Relics it once contained—The Porch of the Caryatides—The Theatre of Herodes Atticus—Cave of Pan—Cave of Aglaurus—Tragic Theatre of Athens—The Acropolis as it once was—View from the Acropolis—Lycabettus—Spirit of Athenian Religion.

THE Parthenon, though the noblest temple, was not the most revered sanctuary on the Acropolis. In this respect Athens resembled many cities of modern Europe, the largest church in which, though without a rival as to wealth and beauty, is yet in dignity inferior to some smaller building of an earlier time. St. Peter's, for example, is not the cathedral of Rome; both St. John Lateran, and Santa Maria Maggiore, take precedence of it; and the glorious Duomo of Milan is less venerated than the church which preserves the memorials of St. Ambrose and St. Augustin. The Temple of Minerva Polias, which

stands to the north of the Parthenon, not far from the edge of the rock, was conceived to be the especial haunt of the Goddess, who had taken the city under her protection in the legendary time of King Cecrops, when Gods and men mixed familiarly together, and Mars himself underwent trial for homicide before the court of Areopagus. It was in that temple, built on the site of a yet earlier one, that the statue of Minerva, made of olive-wood and supposed to have fallen from heaven, was preserved; a statue probably far more venerated than the colossal divinity which Phidias placed in the Parthenon. There also burned the lamp which was never extinguished, and which was replenished with oil but once a year. It was to that temple that the sacred veil was brought from Eleusis by the Panathenaic procession. In that temple the mystic serpent of the Acropolis had his abode; in it were preserved the throne of Xerxes, and the sword of Mardonius. But it had memorials also of an earlier and holier time. It enshrined the tomb of Erectheus, one of the Athenian

kings, and it commemorated the contest between Minerva and Neptune. It contained the sacred olive, which rose from the earth at the command of the Goddess, and which sprung up again after the Persians had burned the fane; and in the votive chapel dedicated to Pandrosus, it enclosed the salt spring which leaped from the rock when Neptune struck the ground with his trident.

The Temple of Minerva Polias, or, as it is sometimes called, the Erectheum, is of Ionic architecture, nor has there ever existed a more perfect specimen of that graceful order. In length it is seventy-three feet, and in breadth thirty-seven, measuring the interior cella, without counting the portico of six pillars at the eastern end. Another portico of four pillars in front, with two retiring pillars, adorned the northern side of the building. At the opposite side is the beautiful porch of the Caryatides, in which Virgins attired in the religious costume of the Panathenaic solemnity take the place of pillars, and support the projecting cornice on their

broad and sedate brows, which in that cornice seem rather to wear a crown than to sustain a burthen. I was much impressed by the pathetic beauty of this silent sisterhood. Of the original six, four remain unsubverted: a fifth was discovered among the ruins,—unfortunately, however, without a head; and the sixth enjoys the British Protectorate. Let us hope that it will one day be restored and take its stand among its "companions equal-aged" for another period of two thousand years before it is again reduced to that necessity from which in barbarous times statues are no more exempt than exiled princes —a necessity of seeing the world.

The loss of this Caryatis, when Lord Elgin carried it off, occasioned more disturbance of heart at Athens than the removal of the frieze of the Parthenon. The rights of hospitality were violated, as the Athenians thought, by the summary mode in which their captive guest was removed from the abode which had sheltered her so long beneath a sky not less temperate than that of Phrygia; and perhaps they deemed

a gallery in the cloudy north but a dungeon compared with the mild prison in which they had so long detained her. The strength of their feeling on this subject is attested by a belief which prevails to this day among the people, a belief that on the night of her second captivity her five remaining sisters were heard to lament with loud sobbings her fate and their own loss. All night long, as the story goes, the voice of lamentation was echoed among the pillars and wafted eastward over the sea; nor was it till the next morning that the sacred breasts of the mourners were revisited by their ancient peace, and that the beams of the rising sun dried the tears upon their stony faces. The legend at least proves that the Athenians have not wholly lost that poetic spirit which called temples and statues into existence when they slept in the quarries of Pentelicus.

Considerable progress has been made in the restoration of the temples on the Acropolis, and there is no reason why that noble work should not one day be completed. The king, on his first

visit to the Acropolis, promised that he would, if it should ever be in his power, restore it to what it had once been. Want of funds has proved the great obstacle, hitherto, to this pious undertaking. Why was not a European subscription raised for the restoration of that which has ever been the intellectual metropolis of Europe, as Rome was, for so many centuries, its religious metropolis, and in the good estate of which the children of all climes have nearly an equal interest? Why have not the wealthy English (those who, in the appropriately religious language of the day, are "blessed with opulence") by whom Athens has been visited since its independence, devoted to a purpose which, while it effected a nobler object, would also have worthily commemorated their names, a few hundreds out of the thousands which they spend annually in sordid luxuries or vain display? The cost would, it is asserted, be by no means considerable. Should these temples ever be restored they would constitute the most suitable receptacles for the sculpture which

sooner or later is sure of being discovered beneath the soil of Greece. They would, at least, furnish the most appropriate asylum for the statues disinterred in Attica. The other cities of Greece might, perhaps, claim to be the depositories of the sculpture found in their respective neighbourhoods; and, indeed, it would be advisable to encourage a local spirit of emulation on the subject. If the Parthenon, when restored, could not fitly be made the Cathedral of Athens, like the Roman courts of Justice, which were thus consecrated to religion, when the heathen had become part of the inheritance of the Church,—and for such a destination the inappropriate character of its sculpture would perhaps make it unsuitable — it should remain, at least, a Temple of Art, which, inclusively, it always was. It should never, however, be crammed; and the neighbouring temples should have their share of the precious relics.

I have often thought with how much more advantage we should study works of art if they were lodged in a number of separate receptacles,

various in size and in architecture, than crowded together as they so commonly are in a single gallery, such as the Louvre, without any rational method or order, whether based upon subject, era, or school, and placed so close to each other that we cannot contemplate a martyrdom of St. Agnes without the eye wandering on to a Callisto or a Danae. Impression thus destroys impression; or, rather, it may be said, that a deep impression can never thus be formed. It would not have been more impossible for the age of Cimabue to have produced a Guido than it is for a man to appreciate a picture by the former just after he has been contemplating one by the latter. Really to understand a work of art requires a state of mind at least, if not a habit of mind, corresponding with that of the artist. Such a state is formed with difficulty, and is speedily erased—especially if the mind be susceptive—by antagonistic impressions. That the character of a genuine work of art should be discerned by one whose imagination is tossed backward and forward by the appeals and

counter-appeals of our heterogeneous collections is as impossible as that the face of nature should be reflected in waves as clearly as in still water.

Even in those equivocal publications, books of extracts, a certain degree of order is observed, and the reader is not expected to relish alternate morsels of King Lear and of Hudibras, or to season Paradise Lost with Lalla Rookh. Our collections of Art are books of extracts put together with a more vulgar promiscuousness. Until, in these matters, we acquire a little rational sensibility we must admit that pictures and statues are, with us, rather a matter of pride than of imaginative or moral delight, and that we consider them less as objects of affection than as part of the furniture of a great city. The several buildings in which works of art are enshrined, ought, however, though separate, to be near each other, that the student may be able to pass easily from one to another; and should, if possible, group together, forming a city of their own—a city of immortality, like that "city of the dead," which in so many an Italian

"Campo Santo" adjoins the city of the living. Nature has seldom facilitated such a design as she does in the instance of the Athenian Acropolis; there are, however, even in our northern cities, sites which suggest this high destination, as in the case of Edinburgh, where the Calton Hill presents a "Mons Sacer" worthy of sustaining a great nation's treasures of art, as well as her historical monuments. London is less fortunate; and though she may build a palace of art, she has no site wholly appropriate to it. Let us hope, however, that even if the Elgin marbles and the stuffed birds are destined to remain for ever beneath one roof, as in a common sense, "curiosities," the present dusty auction rooms and dingy vaults of Trafalgar Square will one day give place to a Gallery, in which each school of art is allowed a room to itself. We have many a picture, each of which deserves as much.

Hitherto the remains of ancient sculpture discovered in Greece since its independence have not been of very high value. There is

however, nothing discouraging in this circumstance, for as yet no sufficient search has been made for them. The Acropolis indeed, has been effectually probed, and not without important, though not always fortunate results. The excavations made there, have in one respect done much harm, in consequence of the stupidity and petty economy with which they have been conducted. The rubbish dug up, has in some places been thrown over the side of the steep, instead of being removed to a distance; the consequence of which is that where the rock once rose like a wall there exists now but an unmeaning slope. How much the apparent elevation, and the grandeur of a hill depends on its shape, must have been felt by anyone who has visited the most beautiful city to the north of the Alps—Edinburgh, and observed that mountainous character which is imparted to the "Salisbury Crags," and to "Arthur's Seat" by their shape and geological formation. Whenever excavations are carried out on a large scale in Greece, it is impossible but that many remains of

antiquity will be discovered. We shall probably be indebted for yet more such to the progress of agriculture; for who can doubt that when the plains of Argos, Elis, Epidaurus, &c., are turned up, they will yield something besides corn crops? The Romans, the chief pillagers of the world, carried off no doubt multitudes of statues—indeed in the time of Trajan it was a common saying, that at Rome there were as many marble statues as human beings. They never, however, contemplated art except with a horny eye "fat with pride" and dim with the lust of conquest, and they probably left untouched not a few of the best works. Like many a modern "Milord" they would have been determined by names in their selection of their prey; and the old Greek, who, like the modern Italian, boasted that he was "molto astuto," would soon have hit on the device of making his best statues submit to an alias or an incognito. The Turks, probably, carried on the work of destruction most fiercely when their religious zeal burned most brightly; and at a later period,

they are said to have occasionally shot the heads of statues out of their cannons for want of better ammunition. A little sacrilege of this sort would be very useful among us now and then. He would be no small benefactor to art who cleansed the Pantheon of St. Paul's; and turned Westminster Abbey back into a church!

The remains of the many buildings that once adorned the base, and lower slope of the Acropolis, give one at the present day but a poor conception of the glorious spectacle which every morning saluted the eye of an Athenian. Of these the most considerable is the Theatre of Herodes Atticus. It belongs to a comparatively late period, and boasts little of that purity, or beauty which belongs to the early Greek models. One rejoices, notwithstanding, to find that the liberality of a foreigner and a philosopher continues to preserve his memory. In the rock beneath the citadel there are two caves, each of which retains a legendary fame. One of them was that dedicated to Pan, in gratitude for the aid which he rendered to the Athenians at

the battle of Marathon. The other is supposed to be the Sacred Cave of Aglaurus, one of the daughters of Cecrops, the first king of Attica, who led thither an Egyptian colony about the year B.C. 1556. There is a legend respecting Aglaurus, (the sister of Pandrosos) according to which Mercury, displeased at the jealousy with which she watched his love for her sister Herse, turned her into a stone. Another legend states that she leaped from the summit of the rock, and by thus offering up her life, delivered her country. It was in this cave that the Athenian youths were first clad in arms by the State which they vowed to defend; to them, therefore, it was as the chapel in which the Christian Knight kept vigil beside his armour during the night on which he was dedicated to his chivalrous mission. Above this cave stand two pillars, the sole remnants of a ruined building.

But the most interesting of all the remains on the slopes of the Acropolis, is that of the temple of Bacchus,—the great Tragic theatre of Athens. This theatre is said to have held

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30,000 spectators, a statement, however, to which it it is difficult to give credence. Some remains still exist of its steps hewn in the rock at the southern side of the Acropolis; but the Pentelic marble with which its seats were covered has disappeared, like the countless statues with which it was decorated. Ranged along those stone seats the Athenians witnessed the tragedies of Sophocles and Æschylus, performed with all the solemnities of a grave religious ceremonial; while incense ascended from the altar of Bacchus, the Lord of the Passions and the inspirer of tragic song. If their eyes wandered, it was to a scene which had been the theatre of events more glorious than any connected with the fated house of Atreus or of Labdacus. Before them lay their own element, the sea, encircling Egina, and Salamis fatal to Xerxes. Even such remembrances are not always attended with triumph. In that theatre the day that the Peloponnesian war was concluded by the complete submission of the Athenians, when Lysander had demolished the fortifications which Themistocles

had erected, the Athenian people witnessed the Electra of Euripides. That day was the anniversary of the battle of Salamis, won seventy-six years before, and had ever been kept as a chief festival. The contrast between the glory of Agamemnon, who alone had ruled the hosts of united Greece, and the exile of his orphan daughter, suddenly struck the Athenians as paralleled only by their own fate;—and the audience melted into tears. Of all the spectacles which the Temple of Bacchus witnessed, that must surely have been the most pathetic. To the stranger visiting the spot the remembrance is perhaps the most salutary moral connected with the Greek drama. He needs such an admonition, for at Athens even the stranger is proud.

Leaving the temple of Bacchus I resolved to ascend the Acropolis once more, before the shades of evening closed around it. I had looked on it, in all docility and submission, as it is; and I should have been glad to have seen it, (might imagination but carry one so far) as it once was. As I advanced from that Tragic

theatre I endeavoured to people once more the slopes of the Acropolis with that marvellous array of buildings which covered them in old time, cresting every prominent part of a rock the base of which cannot measure less than 2000 feet by 1000. In that glorious array stood many a building devoted to public business, or pleasure: temples, altars, and Choragic monuments, that is to say, pillars or small temples, crowned with the tripod which was dedicated to Bacchus by each Athenian citizen who had at his own cost maintained a chorus to which the prize had been adjudged. A street lined with these trophies and votive offerings had once borne the name of the street of tripods. The only memorial of it that remains is that beautiful little building usually called the lantern of Demosthenes, but in reality a Choragic monument.

Having completed the ascent I walked once more from one end of the Acropolis to the other, in my imagination restoring the ruins, and endeavouring to see all

things as Pericles saw them, perhaps the day before the pestilence set in at Athens. What a spectacle must that have been, and what a time to be the leader of a people! At least six temples once stood on that sacred platform besides those which we now behold. In the midst of them were ranged innumerable altars, tripods, and historic monuments. Pausanias tells us that in his day there remained three thousand statues, after Nero had carried off as many as he needed for the adornment of that "Golden House" which princes trembled to enter. All round the platform on which these temples stood, and girdling it with their mythic and historic zone of marble, ran the Cyclopean walls that guarded the sacred temenos. Those walls were carved in relief, with sculptures, the designs of Phidias, representng the Giant Wars, the battle of the Amazons, the achievements of the great national hero, Theseus, and the records that belonged to the legendary age of Athens; that age in which her historic glories still lay fermenting and undeveloped in her bosom,

and from the memory of which the Athenian ever gained fresh inspiration. Above all, there in the centre, stood the Parthenon, itself the embodied image and statue of perfect majesty. On its eastern front hung those golden shields (the traces of which still remain) which caught, every morning, the light of the rising sun; and beside it stood the statue of Minerva Promachos, seventy feet in height, the tutelary genius of Athens, gazing far off over the subject sea, and sustaining a spear, the golden summit of which, like the crest of her helmet, was seen by ships doubling the promontory of Sunium.

The Acropolis itself hardly interested me more than the views which extended thence before me from every part of its boundary. Immediately below lay the city with all its beautiful ruins. Beyond it spread some gracefully moulded hills, one only of which, Lycabettus, or the "hill of light," which is higher than the Acropolis, reaches any considerable elevation. The rest are just lofty

enough to give importance to a temple, or to be crowned by a legend. They are sufficient to attract the attention, and to prompt the imagination, without engrossing either. How well such a situation suited the artistic character of the Athenian mind; and how much the better because nothing in the immediate neighbourhood was imposing enough to absorb that mind or to control it! Athens was the kingdom of Art, not of Nature: Nature is there but the foundation of Art, while Art is the adornment and completion of Nature, who receives more than she gives, and is content with her portion. The green mound on which the Temple of Theseus stands would be nothing if it did not lift that temple into purer light; and the rock of the Areopagus was not lofty enough to dwarf the dignity of the court installed upon it. On the summit of Lycabettus the Athenians built nothing. We can easily guess the reason of this. It is too sharp to afford a majestic foundation, and so high that the temple raised on it would not have been distinctly seen.

The Romans, in their earlier and more religious days, would have crowned that hill with a Fane dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and consulted the auguries thence, at the commencement of each new war. In their decline, an Emperor would have surmounted it with his own statue cast in gold. The Egyptians would have hewn it into a pyramid, and made its shadow an allegory. In modern Italy it would have been hollowed into a cell for a hermit, who some centuries ago would have knelt there, telling his beads by the light of a setting moon; and in later times would have enjoyed there his noon-tide siesta, and kept a charitable flask of "Virgin's lac" for the benefit of dusty travellers. The English would have planted a windmill on it—urged by that impulse which compels nations to illustrate their character by the works of their hands, and often to leave in those works a caricature of their own moral features.

And yet, on their small scale, nothing can be more exquisitely lovely in shape than the hills

immediately around Athens, enamelled as they are in spring with a profusion of flowers not always to be found at that season in the trim pleasure-grounds of less favoured lands. The longer I looked on those hills, the finer seemed their infinite sweetness of outline. Farther off, the objects that met my eye were noble in character; on one side extended Hymettus, on the other Parnes, between and beyond both, Pentelicus. So regular in outline are the long level ranges of these mountains (formed as if for the winds to run races on them), that, notwithstanding their size, the impression they convey is not one of mountain wildness, but of serene elevation, placid strength, and severe majesty. On the south lies the sea, so distant that you see it only in its calm expanse, and yet so near that it loses nothing of the purple light which flashes from its ripple or streams along its tides.

The Acropolis strikes the key-note of all the visual harmonies around it, and interprets all things, from the palm-tree that waves its plumes

beside Athenian walls, to the blue horizon of the sea, and the snowy mountain. It was when I looked beyond it that I understood it. In name it was a religious sanctuary; in original intention a citadel; but in essential character it was a giant altar, and the divinity served there was the Spirit of Beauty—the spirit that created Greek mythology, that inspired Greek poetry, that organised Greek society, that methodised Greek philosophy, and that has preserved from confusion and corruption the complex tissue of Greek history. On that altar, and in honour of that divinity, temples themselves were offered as sacrificial gifts, and with them whatever else the Athenians esteemed of highest worth, the works of their chief artists, the monuments of their bravest actions, the statues and the trophies of their greatest men. This worship of Beauty, indeed, aspired to be, and believed that it was, something more and higher; if it had not so aspired, it never, never would have been as high a thing as it became. To have been called "a nation of

artists and slaves" would have been as repugnant to the Athenians in the former as in the latter count of the indictment. They were no race of connoisseurs or amateurs, substituting virtù for virtue, prating of art and antiquity, and governed by Punchinello and the foreigner. They built to their gods. Had they been mere devotees of Art they might have aspired to build, but assuredly the heavy masses of the Parthenon would never have toiled up the rugged ascent of the Acropolis. Not only did they build to their gods, but they built especially to the severer and the more venerable among them; and most remarkable is it that, while Beauty was their real inspiration, no temple rose on the Acropolis to the Goddess of Beauty. It is thus that in the region of moral, as of physical things, the centre of gravity is an impalpable point, and that the focus round which our thoughts, even the most eccentric of them, revolve in their orbits, while its position may be inferred by a scientific process, remains unrevealed to the eye.

The Athenians have by some been called the most religious of the Greek nations; I have often doubted whether they were not the least so; but there is a sense in which the two positions will not be at variance. They were the most spiritual in imagination, because they possessed the widest and most soaring imagination; but their heart was too vagrant to be religious, and their will was not strong enough for that most aspiring and most sustained of the energies. They were liberal in the admission of divinities, but lax in obedience to them:—never, perhaps, were a people on such easy terms with their gods. In worship they were assiduous; indeed they thought they never could see too much of their gods; and that the rather because the more they saw of them the more they could talk them over, as they supposed, getting at once what they desired, and escaping what they feared. Their type in this respect might have been the infant Mercury, who stole the lyre of Apollo, and hid away the thunderbolt of Jove, with the aid of

ingenuity, loquacity, and a graceful impudence. Between the rival divinities they divided the prize; they gave to Minerva their imagination, and to Venus their heart; and where they felt least they were most eloquent in discourse. Yet, in their earlier period, they must have been really religious. The religious affections have frequently cooled down before the costliest offerings have been laid on the altars of religion, and great temples have been, perhaps, not more often the expression of an existing devotion than the monuments of a faith in process of congelation. The most religious period of the Athenian nation, I have little doubt, had long preceded the period of its greatest glory, though but for the former the latter would never have existed; and the Goddess of Wisdom and Chastity had probably been worshipped with a simpler and more fervent devotion in the old temple which the Persians burned, than ever she was in the Parthenon. Notwithstanding, if beauty was the secret inspiration, at least it was not the recognised aim of the Athenian

mind; Art exercised a wider sway than she claimed; she was too high still to be her own object; she was contented to walk "among the honourable women." that followed in the train of a mightier potentate, and to this religious aspiration she owed her most enduring triumphs.

The poets tell us that nature alone is permanent, while the works of human hand moulder into oblivion. It is not altogether so; the Temple of Victory rises again out of its dust, and the Parthenon still opposes its broad brow to the wasting winds of time, while rivers have been dried up, and fruitful lands have become a wilderness. It was thus that I mused on the Acropolis, when my attention was caught by a faint suffusion thrown on a white and prostrate pillar near that against which I leaned:—I turned, and saw through a long range of columns the setting sun which had dropped from its vapoury veil a moment before it was to disappear. Swiftly as the progress of some mastering minstrelsy the splendour leaped from cloud to

cloud, and lit up the illumination of the west: in a few minutes more the east returned it like an echo; the sea burned, and seemed to shake beneath the dark fire; and the far mountain ridges, virginally robed in winter snow, became crimson first, and then seemed to grow almost transparent with the increasing light:—infinitude beyond infinitude of pacific glory opened out before me in the heavens, as cloud responded to cloud, and the sacred communion spread throughout the firmament. It was the same glorious and triumphant spectacle, a foretaste, surely, of something higher than men can as yet know or desire, which the great luminary had exhibited before the eyes of successive generations, from the time that "Earth beheld it first on the fourth day;"—and it will be repeated without speck, flaw, or imperfection, till the day of judgment.

CHAPTER V.

ATHENS.

Temple of Jupiter Olympius — Practical Benefit resulting from Great National Monuments—The Ilissus—A Rural Festival near Athens.

THE morning after that of my arrival at Athens I was awakened at an early hour by a loud, unceremonious, but by no means unmusical laugh at my bedside. In Grecian air one wakes lightly and at once; I had, therefore, no difficulty in recognising our faithful guide Elias, though he tossed his head higher than ever, flung his raven locks further back over his shoulders, and was attired with a degree of splendour that threw into the shade even the glittering apparition which had greeted me first at Patras. I must not attempt a description of his attire—suffice it to say that it was in shape the ordinary Greek costume, but that it was

tricked out in the most brilliant and at the same time harmonious colours, and was as thick set with silver and gold as Persian poetry is with metaphors. He gave me time to wonder at him, and then broke forth with his usual volubility, or rather with much more; for, sleeping like a dog whenever he had nothing to amuse him, he had laid in, during our voyage, a store of repose which probably served him for a week. "You sleep always—toujours—though the sun soon up. I bring you very safe here—all safe with me—comfortable—no robbers—I walk this one hour—people wonder at my dress—people whisper—ask much questions—people much pleased." I told him that he was in all respects admirable, and that I was going to get up. "Yes," said he, as he departed; "you get up—much haste. You see Teseo—you see many temples—all very fine at Atene—I order breakfast—Cook fear me—you eat Hymettus—honey very good—plenty—plenty!"

And even so it turned out; never surely was there such honey as that of Hymettus, so pure,

so fresh, so fragrant, the essence of all flowers; —to eat it seemed rather a poetic enjoyment than a corporeal act, especially when one remembered in how many an old song it had been celebrated. Notwithstanding, I did not prolong my meal sufficiently to devour its parent Hymettus, for I was as eager to see as Elias was to be seen. The Acropolis I had visited; but the rest of the city remained unexplored. And yet I would rather never have seen Athens, than see it with the eyes of those travellers who literally run and read. Everything at Athens *may* indeed be seen in two days; but it is only when we have grown intimate with its precious relics that they begin to talk to us familiarly about themselves, their histories, and their recollections. They detect at once an abstracted, an egotistic, or a restless mood, and lock their lips. Neither are they communicative to one who rushes greedily upon the feast spread before him. To observe and enjoy in travel, nothing is needed more than moral temperance. A man should never devote himself exclusively to

the new objects around him. He should read his old books and think his old thoughts, and preserve the continuity between the present and the past; for otherwise he retains no standard by which he can measure new impressions, and they flit past him like objects in a dream. Mentally to assimilate, the old stock must bear a large proportion to the new graft, which, without a congenial support, will not grow, and in any case will only grow at its leisure. Let a man, instead of launching upon a sea without a chart when he visits a new region, throw himself back from time to time into old associations until he feels as if he were at home: he will then, when he sallies forth to see some particular object of interest, appreciate it with as fresh a satisfaction, as if, while he was musing on the matter by his own fire-side, a bird of the air had carried him aloft and placed him beside the object of his curiosity.

One of my favourite haunts while at Athens was the Temple of Jupiter Olympius, the largest fane ever raised to that divinity. Even the

Athenians, with all their energy, were not able to pile up those vast masses of marble in a less period than that of six hundred years. The temple was founded by Peisistratus, and is sufficient in itself to prove that he was not wholly unworthy of a throne. Its design is worthy of him to whom the world is indebted for the preservation of the works of Homer. How often must those around him have laughed at an undertaking which, as they doubtless believed, could never be completed! Peisistratus knew better; and if the "Tyrant" could have foreseen that the mighty fane was to owe its completion to another absolute sovereign, regarded no doubt by the Athenians as a usurper like himself, he might have derived an argument in favour of Monarchy from the power for good as well as for evil, which a concentration of national resources, and an unquestioned Will, impart. So proud of his achievement was the Emperor Adrian, who completed this wonder of the world, that he called by his name the portion of Athens in which it stood. Of its hundred

and twenty pillars, seventeen only remain; and it is singular that, like many Greek temples, the rest owed their destruction to the circumstance which promised them immortality. Had they consisted of the soft tufo that abounds all over southern Italy, or of that porous and watery petrification of which the temples of Pestum were built, we should possess them still; but they were of Pentelican marble, and the Turks wanted lime for their fortifications.

The height of these pillars is sixty feet. So far apart do they stand that you look up to the vast marble beams (if one may so call them) that run from capital to capital, expecting to see them depressed in the centre, as a beam of timber would be under the like circumstances. These pillars retain a whiteness such as a London chimney-piece would in vain emulate, and stand up bravely prepared to encounter the adversities of another thousand years, undefaced and perfect, though centuries had passed over them "before the first of Druids was a child." My favourite

time for visiting this noble brotherhood was when the full moon shone upon their shafts, and the night wind sighed through the foliage of their intricate Corinthian capitals. Beautiful as is the effect of moonlight on a Gothic ruin it is perhaps yet more satisfactory on a Grecian; for the long and polished cornice glitters like silver in its beam, and the tall pillars fling their black shadows far away—shadows more simple, more massive, and sharply defined than those cast down from Gothic tracery. When I speak of moonlight, however, I refer to the moon of the south, which fills half the heavens with light before its disk begins to peer above the horizon.

What is to be the fate of this temple, no small part of which has already stood during nearly half the period that has elapsed since the creation of man? Further ruin would seem impossible unless occasioned by an earthquake, or another irruption of fanatics; for mere barbarians would wage war against it as vainly as against its parent Pentelicus. What if its destinies be yet unaccomplished, and if it should once more lift up

its head and wear a crown never yet accorded to it? More wonderful things have happened. Six hundred years were necessary for its completion; why should not the labour of rebuilding it, if the cost be too heavy for the energies of a young nation, be distributed over six hundred years more? Peisistratus knew, what was yet better known to the men who founded the cathedrals of mediæval Europe, that such labours are no unprofitable burthens, as they affect the nations that undertake them. They bind together remote generations: they are the golden cord on which high aspirations and generous efforts in successive years are strung and garlanded: they give continuity to a nation, and impersonate its history. In consecrating the present to the future they call in the future to the support of the present. Individuals and nations alike are strengthened in hours of weakness by whatever confirms their faith in that high destiny which lies before them. Their end cannot yet be come, they say, for there is yet work to be done. Michael Angelo, when asked why he had

never married, answered that he had never had time; until his picture of the "Last Judgment" was finished, perhaps, he would not have found time to die.

When Thrasybulus led his seven hundred warriors to Athens on an enterprise that seemed all but hopeless, and recovered the city from the grasp of the "thirty tyrants," may he not have pointed the attention of the despondent to the Olympian pillars, when first in sight of his advancing band, and said, "The greatness of Athens over! why, it is but begun!" If I were King Otho, and not in debt, I would proclaim the Olympian Temple the metropolitan cathedral of Greece;—I would lay another foundation-stone, and say, "If we raise a pillar or half a pillar each year, it is enough; a few centuries will complete the work." The country would not be the poorer and might be greatly the richer for spending a thousand pounds per annum, if it could afford no more, on the work. The Temple moreover would be one day completed if it be the intention of Providence to

build up again a Greek nation. After an interval of two hundred years a use has been found for the crane so wisely left on the half-raised tower of Cologne. Great enterprises have a better chance of success than petty, for they evoke a great spirit and summon great allies to their support. They require, moreover, a sound foundation; and that in itself is half the work. A good plan and a good intention supply the other half.

Close to the Temple of Jupiter is the Ilissus,—perhaps one should rather say, is the bed of the Ilissus; for, in dry weather at least, the stream is scantily fed. If there was as little water in it in old times the fair captive who descended to its reedy brink, steadying the pitcher on her head, must have had even more cause to complain than the matron who led the captive chorus in the Hecuba. Lapsing from the rocky steeps of Hymettus the slender rill winds past the site where in the time of Aristotle the Lyceum sheltered his disciples in its groves. Not a vestige of the Lyceum remains; and the temple dedicated to the Ilissian Muses has also dis-

appeared. Trickling on in a southerly direction the Ilissus tends toward the sea, but does not reach, and apparently never reached it. Like the Cephisus, which flows also toward the sea, passing at the other side of Athens, it is swallowed up before it reaches its destination, not in sandy deserts, but in thymy hollows, flowery knots, and caverns of a tempting coolness. A lover of Greek mythology—one who not only detected its mystic wisdom, the purity of its source, and the latent spirituality of its aim, but who also appreciated its deficiencies and its insufficiency,—might easily find in these two classic streams an apt emblem of that mythology, and generally of the imagination itself in its weakness and its strength. The fable or the myth, he might say, *tends* ever to the truth, but never attains it; for its course is erratic, and it dallies with every trifle that it passes. If you mount an eminence and observe its direction you discover indeed whither it was drawn by the law of its nature, and what destination it would have reached if its source had been higher on the mountain and

if its impulse had been mightier. To profit by its index, however, you must abandon its wanderings; as well be stifled in the sands as in flowers,—in sordid cares as in sensuous illusions. There is thus a moral, it seems, not only in "running brooks," but in brooks that can run no more; and even the northern traveller in Greece finds it difficult to avoid indulging in that moral and figurative interpretation of nature in which the Greek mind found its perpetual pastime.

In the neighbourhood of the Ilissus I was present at a festival, probably not unlike many which that stream witnessed three thousand years ago. Its office was to celebrate the beginning of Lent, or rather, perhaps, it should be regarded as the closing scene of the Carnival, which was impersonated in the form of an old man, and decapitated, amid many characteristic solemnities, at the Temple of Jupiter Olympius. Nearly all the inhabitants of Athens were present, from the oldest to the youngest, and joined in the jubilee with a sort of fierce and impas-

sioned merriment, such as left an Italian festa far behind, and suggested to me the revels which had in old time wakened the echoes of

"Old Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain."

The king and queen rode about, with a placidity truly Teutonic, amid groups of peasantry who seldom interrupted their sports for a moment on the approach of the royal pair. They did not even take off their red caps, a want of good breeding which I was sorry to observe; though a few of the nearest pressed the right hand against the breast, and made the profound and dignified oriental bow. The rest danced around in circles—the men with the men, and the women with the women, and exhibited in the winged movements, not only of their flexile limbs but of the whole body, a combination of native grace and wild enthusiasm, such as can be paralleled alone by the dances depicted on an Etruscan vase. Never before was I so much impressed with the lamentable loss we westerns have sustained in the substitution of our hideous, unmeaning, sordid, and doleful costume for one

on which the eye can always rest with pleasure and, where numbers are assembled, with delight. The Greeks, who are wholly indifferent to comfort—as we should probably be if we retained anything like their youthful elasticity and purity of bodily health—not only attach great importance to dress, but display a taste in the arrangement of it, and wear it with a grace which adds to the brilliant beauty of such an attire as theirs. On this occasion every one put forth his best. The upper part of the body was covered with a tight vest embroidered with gold; under that fluttered a white kilt or petticoat reaching the knee; lower down were leggings of every colour in the rainbow, and scarlet shoes. The grave lavender-coloured slopes were empurpled as the revelry swept over them; and, like the steed which glories in its rider, inanimate Nature seemed to catch the animation of her beautiful children.

In the midst of the dancers were numberless companies of peasants, seated round their rural feast. Each group had its thick and many-

coloured carpet, on which the guests placed themselves, cross-legged, in a circle, and eat, as Homer says, "until their hearts were satisfied." Homeric shouts of "inextinguishable laughter" rose up also among them from time to time; and many a trick was exhibited, and many a wild prank played, but without any admixture of vulgarity. Along the field, and about the tufted banks of the Ilissus, horsemen galloped with a fury altogether indescribable. Sometimes they advanced in a troop, and suddenly breaking like a rocket, dispersed, and scoured the plain in every direction. Sometimes a single horseman darted forward, like an arrow shot from a bow, and passed in front of the charging column, or thridded his way among its ranks with the skill of a skater who describes a figure of eight. They sat far back on their horses, as their forefathers sat, if we can trust the witness of ancient sculpture, and as the cavalry of the East sit to this day; their scarlet caps and golden tassels (often entangled in their long hair) gleaming in the sun, and their white kilts blown across the

horse's shoulder or streaming behind. Often they flung javelins at each other, and that with such hearty good-will that the effort not seldom went near tossing them off their little white horses. Those horses had caught the madness of the hour; and though no princess like Andromache had fed them with corn soaked in generous wine, they flashed past us with feet that hardly touched the ground, little sharp heads pointed into the air, and protruding eyes; fleet as the wind, and so light and slender that a wind, apparently, might have blown them away.

In the midst of all this riot, a gaunt old camel paced sedately and pensively with measured steps; now holding his level head as steadily on high as if he were pointing toward Mecca and the Prophet's tomb; now discreetly inclining it, as one who takes gently whatever fortune comes, and browsing on the pink flowers (the silver rod) which abound on the steeps of the Ilissus. Besides this representative of the Ottoman Empire the ministers of all the European powers were present, as well as

most of the travellers at Athens; while numbers of ladies, English, German, Italian, and Greek, established themselves under the shadow of the Temple, a single pillar of which was large enough to protect a numerous group from the sun. From this tumultuous scene there were but two dissentients; the camel was one; the other was a Scotchman, almost as unworldly in his ways, and quite as simple-hearted and as indifferent to opinion, who walked about with me, and whose considerate, learned, and benignant discourse I had had many opportunities of enjoying. He regarded the tumult with an alien eye, and with a covenanting rigidity bent his gaze inflexibly before him, as we passed group after group of charging horsemen, to the no small danger of every bone in his body. More than once he stopped and placed his umbrella under his left arm, while he stuck the forefinger of an uncompromising right hand into the palm of the other, and stated to me that though decidedly, and on reflection, a liberal, he could not just quite see how a people so senseless and volatile could be safely

trusted with that management of their own affairs so essential to their well-being and to the nature of things,—a very sagacious question, which many years may leave unanswered. Pacific camels and steady Anglo-Saxons may safely be trusted with self-government, because, absorbed as they are in industrialism, they happen to want next to no government. The more fervid races of the south, when indulged in unbounded liberty, are like children cursed with an exemption from all control. The feast is no sooner finished than the indigestion begins. When the holiday is over and the music has died away, the revellers, who abandoned or destroyed their paternal dwelling, because no palace smaller than the illimitable firmament was worthy of their magnificent aspirations, are driven, for refuge, by stress of weather, into some hollow tree or slimy cavern narrower than its smallest room. Despotism is demanded as a protection where lawful government was disowned, and national glory, in place of individual freedom, is called in to stay the heart-burn of disappointed vanity.

CHAPTER VI.

ATHENS.

The Stoa of Adrian—The Gate of the Agora—The Monument of Philopappus—Stadium—Temple of Theseus—Temple of the Winds—The Lantern of Demosthenes—The Pnyx—The Prison of Socrates—The Religion of Socrates—The Areopagus.

Among the buildings of a later date at Athens, and possessed of an interest historic rather than artistic, is the Stoa of Adrian, of which there still remain nine Corinthian pillars. Close by is the gate of the Agora, built also by Adrian, and in tolerably good preservation. Attached to it is a marble tablet covered with an inscription which has turned out on examination to be a list of prices and market regulations! A record of this minute character puts us in mind of Herculaneum, and brings us more near to the Athenians, considered in connexion with their daily life, than we are brought by their noblest works. Another monument of the same

period is a building erected by Philopappus, a Syrian, to the memory of his father and grandfather, who had been kings in the East, until the Romans came and took away their place and name. It is situated on a hill opposite the Acropolis and of considerable height. Its remains are imposing in scale, and consist of white marble; but they are of Roman architecture, and their arches, which rise tier above tier, as in the Colosseum, contrast unfavourably with the adjoining models of a purer age. The walls of this building sustain an alto-relievo, the figures of which are the size of life, and remain in good preservation: but the inspiration had gone by long before the well-meaning chisel was applied to the marble; and if a Phidias had appeared at such a time, he could have probably effected but little, though seconded with all the patronage of an Adrian.

It would be interesting to ascertain whether the Athenians resented the intrusion of the Roman architecture on their sacred soil, or applauded it. The latter I should guess to

have been the fact. Nations, like individuals, are apt to grow tired of their best thoughts, especially if they have stumbled upon them early, instead of fighting their way to them by degrees, and prefer a lower class for the sake of variety. Senility, that is, age without its appropriate honours and virtues, must ever babble, and national senility delights in the petty and the trivial. The ablest men in the time of George the Second, nay of Queen Anne, laboured under the same "invincible ignorance" as the stupidest, with respect to Gothic architecture. When the Athenians had talked away all their wisdom, and had allowed valour and patriotism to be superseded by rhetoric and buffoonery, they may still have made their boast of the Parthenon; but I suspect that the ascent to the summit of the Acropolis became irksome to them. Not many years have elapsed, since the ascent to an eminence, almost as noble, and as richly stored with venerable monuments —the rock of Cashel, had become so toilsome, that Archbishop Price, compassionating the

Sunday labours of his coach-horses, abandoned the glorious and time-honoured cathedral on its summit, which at that time needed but some repairs to its roof, and has since fallen into ruin. No diminution either of zeal or of taste could ever among the Athenians have produced an analogous act of barbarism: but it is not improbable that under the specious pretence of comprehensiveness or liberality, they were more than willing to tolerate the bad, as well as the good in Art: and it was well that the Temple of Jupiter remained unfinished, and constrained them, as by a vow, to walk in the ancient ways.

There remains one more memorial of a comparatively late period at Athens, and a very remarkable one. It is a Stadium, or long amphitheatre, constructed as a place for chariot-races and other games, and beautifully situated near the Ilissus. Its length is about eight hundred feet, and its shape is that of a long, narrow horse-shoe. Its marble seats have disappeared; but its form is so well preserved, that

it will doubtless be again used as a place of public assembly or public amusement. For this great work the Athenians were indebted to Herodes Atticus, as well as for the theatre under the Acropolis.

Besides those ruins of which the names are preserved, you meet in most parts of Athens with immense fragments, thrown idly by in every court and garden, and half-formed street :— massive walls, prostrate columns, broken capitals, and fragments of cornices. Seldom is a house built without the discovery of such objects among its foundations. My friend Mr. F., while clearing the ground for his house, dug up no small quantity of sculpture also, the greater part of which he has inserted into his garden-wall, where it is well seen, and is safe from molestation. Some pieces of sculpture, quite equal to the expectations formed, have been disinterred in Athens. For the most part they were placed, as soon as they saw the light, in the Temple of Theseus. Shall we ever send back the Elgin marbles, and will the king of

Bavaria one day restore those of Egina? Such acts of reparation may perhaps be made, if these works of art should ever be really appreciated in the countries which have appropriated rather than adopted them;—otherwise certainly not. So long as statues are regarded chiefly as matters of vanity, of course no nation will part with its spoils.

Of such treasures the Theseum is not an unworthy receptacle. Its Pentelican pillars (six at each end, and thirteen at the side) have escaped the injuries of time and fortune better than any other considerable building at Athens. A gentler destiny has attended what was a monument not only of Athenian glory, but of — a rarer thing by far — Athenian penitence. The Athenians had banished Theseus to the island of Scyros, where he died. No sooner had they returned from their own voluntary exile in that of Salamis, where they had taken refuge when the Persians held Athens, than they called to mind their great national hero, and made what atonement they could to

him by bringing back his bones to the city of his care, and building a temple above them. Theseus was the mythic hero of the Athenians. With him began that heroic era which supplanted the patriarchal age of their hereditary kings. To him it was that they owed their popular institutions. It was he who united into one nation the twelve independent races that inhabited the twelve plains of Attica, constituting Athens the metropolis of all, and commemorating, while he confirmed, their union by the Panathenaic festival.

The stranger at Athens is sometimes pleasurably, sometimes painfully impressed by contending objects of interest, new and old. Surrounded by antiquities, he is surrounded also by all the signs of progress. But twelve houses remained in Athens at the conclusion of the war. It is now a flourishing city. You turn in one direction, and see the temple of Theseus; in another, and your eye rests on the military hospital in which some of the patriots wounded during the war of independence have found a

home. You contemplate the memorials of Adrian, and the palace of a modern potentate claims your attention at the same moment. It is a melancholy reflection that as the new city increases the ancient monuments will become more and more eclipsed. What would the Temple of the Winds or even that of Theseus be if buried in miles of streets, alleys, and squares? From such profanation the Acropolis alone is secure; and even of that the summit only; for it is hard to say to what extent that noble rock may not be injured if houses are allowed to creep up its lower slopes. There is nothing, however grand, which the hand of man is not competent to spoil: witness the deplorable injury done to the Calton hill at Edinburgh by that barbarism, the Nelson monument, the height of which dwarfs everything in the neighbourhood. The Acropolis indeed is far from being improved by the Norman tower which rises among its garland of temples; but that solitary monument of an important historical era is, notwithstanding, deserving of respect.

And yet the sound of the chisel once more in Athens is a cheering sound. In the invigorating air of Greece everything that speaks of progress is attended with hope, for there despondency cannot exist. With little reason for the expectation I could not help fancying, while within the enchanted circle, that something great was again to arise on Athenian soil. With what feelings then must not the men of old have laboured, when the works on which they toiled were the Parthenon and the Olympian Temple, and when the world had not yet become covered with ruins? They must have thought that every stone they lodged in its bed was laid there for all time. How must not hope have led to hope, and dream to dream! A century had covered the Acropolis with temples:—why should not another century cover the lower slopes of the Lycabettus? Sunium already boasted its fane. How many a promontory of Parnes and Hymettus jutting forth into its green sea of Arbutus and Ilex must not have seemed to them to await a consecration from which the Sun-god could seldom

withhold an approving glance. Of all builders, perhaps of all men, they must have been the happiest. They did not know how lightly Time regards his noblest works; they had read little of history. Those who know as much of it as we do, little as that may be, will perhaps bequeath it but few materials in future. No doubt, the Athenians were presumptuous; but not to have been so they must have been saints.

Athens is not entirely dependent on its ancient monuments for historic interest. It contains specimens of the Byzantine architecture in some churches, which, though small, struck me as very beautiful. It is unfortunate that their detestation of the Turks impelled the Athenians to pull down all the minarets, a few of which would have added much to the characteristic expression of the modern city. I wish also that some more of their palms remained: one only of all that Athens once possessed could I discover, and from whatever point of view it was seen, its slender column, scaled not fluted, and the arching crown of its branches, added grace to the objects

around. Even in the distant landscape you detect but few palms: a landscape ever varied and ever beautiful, of which you catch fair glimpses, as you look down the vistas of new streets in a city not yet overgrown. Many of these streets are, at their further end, not yet dismantled of the green sod; and the wind which rushes up them wafts you the smell of flowers, not of smoke.

The Greek costume added infinitely, I thought, to the characteristic expression of the city, and compensated in some measure for the deficient beauty of the women. The children, with their black, flashing eyes and muse-like foreheads, possess an extraordinary degree of loveliness; but among the women of Athens beauty is not a frequent gift, although, where met, it is beauty of the highest and most intellectual order. On the other hand, Greek women have a naïve frankness and simplicity that is very charming. "Do you like Madame —— as much as all the world seems to do?" I asked one of them, at a large party. "I not like

her much," was the answer; "what for her beauty to me? I not a man.' I much not like her, for she never ask me to her house." Many *misunderstandings*, at least among us, would be prevented if people spoke as frankly.

If you wish to have a complete conception of Athens you must throw in, of course, some of the usual vulgarities of a metropolis—cafés, restaurants, a theatre, and hotels. I am sorry to say, also, that as you walk in the streets your ear is too often saluted by the sound of billiard balls or the rattling of dice. Among its drawbacks is to be included that universal nuisance, the all-seeing English traveller—the traveller of that class, I mean (for to no nation do more intelligent travellers belong also) who scribble their names on the walls of temples, write witty criticisms in the stranger's book at inns, are always paying too much, and raving about extortion, depreciate everything that is not like what they are used to, swallow an infinite quantity of dust, and return home with as much knowledge and worse morals than they took with them.

In the small circle of Athens these gentry are more in your way than in the Brightons and Cheltenhams of the Continent. One of them observed to a friend of mine: "What liars these Greeks are, and what fools, too, to fancy they can persuade us that they defeated the Persians at Marathon, when we know that it was the Turks that fought there, and d—d badly they did fight!" Another, who joined me sometimes on the Acropolis, passed his time there chiefly in prophesying concerning his dinner. To stamp impressions of the beautiful upon natures as coarse as these would be as futile an endeavour as that of writing love-letters on sand-paper. Another, of the same class, who was much troubled with hypochondria, made me look attentively in his face whenever we met, and tell him how he seemed. Once only did I observe a gleam of satisfaction on his face; it was when I pointed out to him a shop door over which was written in large letters, "English medicines sold here." We entered the shop together, but I fear he did not buy what

he wanted, for during several days after he suffered so much from sickness of stomach as to be unable to leave his room.

It is a fortunate circumstance that among the monuments of antiquity which have escaped the spoiler's hand, at Athens, are some of a character so singular that if they had perished (and a touch might have destroyed them) nothing would have remained to give us an idea of what they had been. One of these is the "Lantern of Demosthenes;" another is the well-known "Temple of the Winds," a small octagon tower of exquisite proportions, the alternate sides of which are graced with projecting porches supported by pillars, while aloft the eight Winds expand their wings, floating forward with refluent hair, and holding in their hands the urns of benignant dews and showery influences, by which the seasons are tempered to the use of man. This building, which contained a water-clock in communication with the fountain Clepsydra, was originally surmounted by a Triton revolving on an axis, and sustaining

in his hand a wand, the point of which drooped over the emblem of whatever wind was blowing at the time. On the side of the building still remain the lines which, like those traced on our dials, marked the hour by the shadow cast from the styles above. This building is a beautiful instance of that architectural tact which turns every practical need to account; it would be a dangerous model, however, in the hands of a copyist, for the least alteration in its proportions would probably spoil its effect, and the slightest misapplication would make it ridiculous. One can hardly hope that it has hitherto escaped being travestied: if, indeed, it has ever been made to surmount a Greek portico, and do service as the spire of a Meeting House, there has, at least, been a moral significance in this application of the Temple of the Winds.

But of all the monuments at Athens I have little doubt that the one which most strongly stirs the spirit of an Athenian youth is that of the Pnyx, or place of public

assembly, in which the people deliberated on matters of state. Time has done no injury here, for the hand of man had done little to embellish what nature had shaped, and patriotic zeal had rendered memorable; the Athenians took counsel in the open air; the vault of a Grecian heaven was their roof; the walls of their parliament house were the mountains that protected their land, and its ornaments were the temples of their gods and the trophies of their heroes, nearly all of which were visible from the spot. Among the green hills to the west of the Acropolis, and distant from it about a quarter of a mile, extends a long semicircular wall of solid rock, made regular by the chisel, the lower tier of which consists of vast blocks, apparently brought to the spot by human labour, and fitted to each other. One of these, which I measured, is nine feet square; another is twelve feet by eight, and proportionally thick. This semicircular enclosure is the place of assembly; in the centre of the natural wall is a range of rude steps, sur-

mounted by the Bema of the orator. It was on that pedestal that Demosthenes stood when he sent forth that voice which silenced every other in Athens, and shook the throne of Macedon.

Dr. Wordsworth, in his delightful book on Greece, attaches a high moral and political importance to the fact that the orator standing on the Pnyx was confronted by the monuments of his country. The following is one of the many eloquent passages in his work, a work not only abounding in learning, but in a poetic discernment which attests the right of the author to the illustrious name he bears:—"Not to their natural genius alone, though in that they stood pre-eminent; not to rules of Art, though ingeniously contrived and elaborately studied; not to frequency of rhetorical exercises, nor to the skill of their teachers, though they were well disciplined by both; nor yet to the sagacity of the audience, though in that they enjoyed a high privilege, was Athens indebted for the piercing eloquence of Pericles and the resistless impetuosity of Demosthenes; but also,

and especially, to these objects, which elevated their thoughts, moved their affections, and fired their imagination, as they stood upon this spot. The school of Athenian oratory was the Pnyx." Closely analogous to this reasoning is one of the arguments on which Grattan laid most stress, when resisting the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. As one swallow does not make a summer, so one argument does not decide a large question; but in his statement there was assuredly something more than eloquence. Very different, apparently, was the bearing of Athenian statesmen at the Pnyx and at the court of Philip, where they could no longer believe in themselves, where they contemplated their country's interests from a different point of view, and, therefore, in a different perspective, and where, with so much dust thrown in their eyes, it was hard to keep a little gold-dust out of their pockets.

Among the green knolls to the west of the Acropolis there is one object of an interest not less deep than that of the Pnyx, if

the legend which hallows it may be trusted. Many of the stony hills are excavated into caves, supposed to have been sepulchral chambers, which resemble the Indian rock-temples, and probably belong to that early period in which the Athenian race retained much of their oriental character. The original destination of these caves is a matter as uncertain as that of the catacombs of Rome and Naples, cities which have never ceased to be inhabited from the time that the excavations were made, and which yet can render as little account of them as man can give of much that lies at the foundations of his moral and social existence. One of these caves preserves the memory, if not of its original purpose, at least of its most memorable application, and is called the "prison of Socrates." It consists of three dark chambers opening into each other, the last of which communicates with the open air by means of a sort of tunnel, wrought through the rock, and issuing into light at the summit of the hill. The Philosopher, from whose capacious soul proceeded

the speculative philosophy of a Plato, and the practical philosophy of a Xenophon, as the Parthenon and the Propylea issued forth from the quarries of Pentelicus, was allowed in his dungeon a view of the Acropolis, and looked upon the Goddess of laborious Wisdom, face to face.

What would one not give to know how far he believed in her and the other Gods of his country? That he believed in much more is certain, as well as that he was cheered by far higher than Pagan hopes; or, teach what he might, he would have taken care that his philosophic "Banquet" should never be garnished with such "bitter herbs" as hemlock. It does not follow that he did not believe in those Gods. Though his dying charge to his pupil whom he commanded to sacrifice to Esculapius, when his unfriendly physicians were about to cure him of the disease of life, was obviously but allegorical in import, yet we know that he advised Xenophon to consult the oracle of Apollo, and that he told his judges he feared the

Gods more than he feared them. Socrates probably believed in one great First Cause; but he could hardly have, with certainty, inferred from that great truth, the non-existence of inferior Powers and "limitary" Intelligences. That the earlier Gods of his country represented great ideas, he knew; but one hardly sees how he could have known whether those ideas were "αυτοχθονες" born of the human soul alone, or whether they were the images of antitypes, existing independently of it. He would not have argued such matters like a sciolist or a man of the world, or ruled by a desire to be thought shrewder than his neighbours; neither would he have fancied he had explained difficulties when he had only explained them away. Alcibiades probably scoffed when he was well, and sent double offerings to the Gods when he was ill. Socrates must have reflected that it is hard to prove a negative, and impossible by any conjecture, to get out of the circle of mystery, unless you believe in the senses only, and thus construct a philosophy narrow indeed—a philo-

sophy for which, as well as for the philosopher, there is room enough in the tub of Diogenes—the kennel of the Cynics.

Socrates must have observed that the best men he knew were commonly devout, and that not in the way of patronising divinities, but of revering them; and he knew that his countrymen had been best and noblest when they were most religious. He must have recognized in man a being obviously intended by nature to kneel, as well as to lie down or stand; and yet, he probably had heard of no nation that worshipped but one God. On the whole, it seems not unlikely that believing, by faith, in the Moral Sense, the Genius, which, as he affirmed, walked beside him, guarding him from evil and injury, and believing, by reason, in a something higher and more divine on which, whatever is best in man finds its support, he was deterred by that docility which is of the family of Faith, and not less by that understanding which works in subordination to reason, from any positive disbelief in his country's Gods, however he may have

doubted as to their existence, and wished to cleanse and simplify their worship.

Such a conclusion would amount to no more than that on such matters Socrates was a wise sceptic, and what is rarer still, a real "Free-thinker," that is, a man who *thinks* as well as declaims, and is *free* from vanity as well as from prejudice. He appears neither to have waged war against his country's religion, nor to have identified his own moral philosophy with it. He professed it, which so virtuous a man would hardly have done, if he was not at least disposed, rather to believe, than to disbelieve it. The last thing one would conclude is, that Socrates believed religious faith to be a delusion, but at the same time, to be one which ought to be respected for the sake of its utility. Such a notion springs naturally from indifferentism, and flatters exclusive pride, without exposing its maintainer to peril; but Socrates was a believer in Truth. That the public good may be promoted by a forbearance from the rash obtrusion of a man's scepticism is a very tenable

position on the hypothesis that the religion concerning which the sceptic doubts is notwithstanding true, or, probably true. No one, on the other hand, who has real faith in the moral sense, (the first revelation accorded to us), and who knows how intimately truth, not only in action but in thought, is associated with all the good that belongs to man's estate, can doubt that if religion were indeed but a delusion and a fraud, the larger and more permanent interests of men could never be promoted by the worship of a lie. A French philosopher has said (and there is philosophy enough in it for a *saying*) that if "a God did not exist it would be necessary to invent one." No doubt it would be—if it were possible: but it does not follow, that to create *a belief* in a God, at once heartfelt and illusory, would be possible; or that to create a belief alone would be salutary. Socrates, I have little doubt, would have considered the manufactory of divinities illicit.

There is one spot alone at Athens, which claims a deeper reverence even than the cave

which is associated with the last days of Socrates—the hill of the Areopagus. It is appropriately situated between the Pnyx, and the Acropolis; Justice thus standing with Religion at her right hand, and the place of Political deliberation at her left. The Areopagus was guarded by yet another local sanction. Not far from it was the sacred enclosure where, shadowed over by rocks, and veiled in a grove of dusky trees, stood once the awful shrine of the Eumenides, who were led thither from the Areopagus after their impeachment of Orestes. No memorial of the Venerable Goddesses remains. On the hill of the Areopagus we still trace the rocky steps, by which the judges made their midnight ascent. Their deliberations were conducted in the dark, lest their judgment should be swayed by the aspect or gestures of the person tried; a singular illustration of the degree in which the susceptive temperament of the south is influenced by visible objects. Their ears were as abstinent as their eyes; and they allowed no species of oratory to be intro-

duced into the pleadings before them. It is also an illustration of the character of Athenian laws that, among the offences tried by them, idleness, which no doubt they accounted the "root of all evil," was one. At Athens it was those only who had pre-eminently deserved well of their country, not the idle, or the improvident, who were maintained at the public charge and at the Prytaneum.

The period during which this Court held its sessions on the "Hill of Mars" was long indeed, if, as the Athenians asserted, it had continued from the time of Cecrops. It was Pericles himself who diminished its authority, and indirectly relaxed the severity of its morals; an injury greater, it is probable, than that which he did his countrymen by involving them in the Peloponnesian war, and one which justifies the well-known aphorism, that the greatest statesmen, next to those who build up their country's institutions, are commonly those who undermine them. One cannot help regretting that it was not before that Court, though in

his time it was probably much corrupted, instead of before the Bouleuterion, that Socrates was tried. A greater than he however stood up before this tribunal. Who can visit the spot and not call to mind the day when St. Paul lifted up his hand there, and pointed to the altar of the "Unknown God!" Nothing can more pointedly mark the comprehensive and piercing intelligence of the Athenians, than the fact that in their city alone such an altar stood: nothing can show how incompetent an organ of religious truth is intellect alone, than the fact that while the Gospel took root in Rome itself, the most corrupt city in the world at that time, and while Apostolic epistles were addressed to Corinth, and to the cities of Asia Minor, Athens, the keen, the versatile, and the *tolerant*, let it pass by. As I stood on that spot I remembered a discussion which I had heard years before among some young men most of whom were enthusiastic admirers of Athens. "It was not" they remarked "in art and science only that the Athenians

excelled; they were also the most charitable of men, the most tolerant, and the most zealous in the discovery of truth. They never stoned the Prophets like the Jews, nor threw Apostles to wild beasts like the Romans. When St. Paul had propounded to them his doctrine, they were at once willing to consider it, and answered, 'We will hear thee again on this matter.'" "Yes," remarked a young student who was present, "but you will find it stated a little further on, that they missed their opportunity. St. Paul left them and returned no more." The wind "bloweth where it listeth," and not where man lists.

CHAPTER VII.

ATHENS.

A Ball at the Palace—A Greek Chief—Lord Byron in Greece—The Plain of Athens—The Cephisus—The Farm of Plato—Estate and residence of an English Settler—Progress of civilisation—Position of the Greek Church—Influence of French literature.

I DID not go to Athens for the sake of gay society; but, notwithstanding, had an opportunity of seeing something of it the day after my arrival, the occasion being that of a ball at the palace. The king and queen, in their deportment to their guests, were what I suppose is called "very gracious;" but as royal conversations at such times consist chiefly of questions, and these questions include no great variety, I need not trouble you with this part of the ceremonial. I have seldom witnessed a more brilliant spectacle than was presented by the motley assemblage of persons from all parts of the world collected on that occasion. Unhappily,

that wretched attire which we of the West boast, and which was introduced when the activities of modern life had trampled its dignities under foot, has, to a great degree, superseded the national costume. It has not, however, done so entirely; and the splendid Greek dresses, thickly scattered among those more modern habiliments, invented, apparently, to shew how like monkeys men can make themselves, gave the scene the character of a pageant. The Albanian dress, you are aware, is different from the Greek; but, in fact, each division of the mainland, and every island, has a costume of its own. The wearers of this dazzling attire were worthy of it. They had more the air of mountain chieftains, heads of clans, and feudal warriors, than of courtiers. Their gestures not only abounded in that perfect grace which the slightest consciousness destroys, but in dignity were actually imposing: their features resembled those of a statue; but their black eyes, flashing with an uneasy light, and black hair waving fiercely on their shoulders, were in

strange contrast with the serenity of ancient sculpture.

To one of these majestic chiefs I was introduced. He must have been about six feet three inches in height; and the only fault in the grand spectacle which he presented was that his waist had been compressed till it was disproportionably small. On our being presented to each other he shook hands with me very warmly, and I hope that my low bow was as significant as Lord Burleigh's shake of the head; since, knowing nothing of modern Greek, I had no other means of expressing my respect for one of the greatest warriors produced by the struggle for Greek independence. He at least knew how to make action significant. Some days previously he had met in society a lady remarkable for her beauty, whom he at once singled out as the object of his devotion. He paid her no compliments, even as to her dress, as a Frenchman might have done; neither did he talk sentiment like an Italian; nor scowl at a rival like a Spaniard; nor stand between her and the fire

while he entertained her with political economy, or the details of his country sports, as an Englishman occasionally does on such occasions. He drew his sword, stated to her that the weapon had cut off the heads of thirty-five Turks—and then laid it at her feet. No doubt he would have said something pretty about laying his heart there also, if he had known that he had a heart; but the Greeks are an impassioned race, simple as well as wily, and not addicted to fine sentiments.

The festal character of the scene was heightened by the amusing contrast exhibited by three solemn Turks, who, hour after hour, sat cross-legged in silent gravity, seldom moving a fold of their cumbrous robes, and indulging in no gesticulation, except that now and then they stroked down their flowing beards with a soothing hand, and rolled their heavy eyes around with staid contempt upon a spectacle which to them must have looked several degrees more like Bedlam than a college of dancing Dervises does to us. Of the ladies,

no doubt they thought about as reverently as we do of the "artistes" who exhibit their dancing powers on the stage of the opera with such vivacity and impartiality as to give the fashionable youth, who regards them with a glass from his stall, little advantage over the honest man who has paid his five shillings and taken up his humbler station in the upper gallery.

Besides several other Philhellenists who had distinguished themselves during the Greek war, one was pointed out to me, on this occasion, whom you will recollect. Mr. F., happening to hear my name, very kindly introduced himself to me, and mentioned that he had known you many years ago. Immediately after his short visit to you, he joined the Greek cause, to which he continued faithful during the whole of the war. In our discussion on that subject, he told me many interesting anecdotes of Lord Byron, with whom he was intimately acquainted. What he may think of him as a poet, I do not know; but he entertains the highest respect for the powers which Lord Byron exhibited as a

man of action and of business. His temper and his shrewdness (as he assures me) were equally admirable; and whenever a quarrel arose between the native chiefs, the matter was referred to him as an arbitrator. He had always tact enough to allay heart-burnings, and his energy was of a nature so eminently practical, that not a few of the vapourers around him found themselves hard at work when they had only thought of a little agreeable excitement. What a pity that he was so prematurely cut off! Who knows but that he might have displayed a high military genius, an attribute which includes so much of imagination as well as of intuition, that it must be in some measure allied with the poetic faculty. Whether, however, he had failed or succeeded, how much might not the severities of a few campaigns have done to re-invigorate his enervated system, purge away his vanity, and shake him out of the self-love which imprisoned him! Byron has never been done justice to, and perhaps never will be. In his day he was extravagantly over-

praised; and after he had become the "spoilt child of the public whom he had spoilt," his errors were with as little discrimination exaggerated,—a violent access of virtuous indignation, with which the public is periodically visited, concurring with its natural inconstancy. His works were, one and all, premature; forced in the hot-bed of a too fervid popularity. His severer critics forget how adverse his fortunes were to his true greatness. They ask, "Had he not rank, wealth, fashion, fame, beauty, &c., &c.?" No doubt he had; but these are only the elaborate nothings that cbreat a great design; the petty entanglements that check free movement. Genius, like Virtue, wears its leathern girdle, and feeds on scanty fare;—is flung upon faith for support, and follows the guidance of a remote hope;—in other words, has not its portion in the present, that it may lay up store for a remoter day. Those who run in flowing attire, not succinct, and on the soft field, not the racecourse, cannot put out their full speed. Considering the eminently practical nature of

Byron's intellect, as well as the rhetorical character that pervades much of his poetry, and which so singularly combines the impassioned eloquence of Rousseau with the antithetical declamation of Pope, it is likely that if he had steadily devoted himself to public life he might even have become a parliamentary leader. His temperament, however, would not have allowed of such a devotion.

My new friend, Mr. F., finding that I was meditating an expedition to the plain of Marathon, invited me to accompany him to a country house which he possesses on an estate not far distant from the battle-field. He has made Greek antiquities an especial study, and published a pamphlet of much learning on the topography of Marathon, as well as of other parts of Attica. I had not then read his work; but the deep acquaintance which his conversation evinced with the ancient authorities on such subjects, made me feel that I was fortunate in falling in with such a guide; and before I had long enjoyed his acquaintance, I thought myself

fortunate on other grounds. We mounted our horses at eleven o'clock, my friend concluding his equipment by sticking a brace of pistols into his holsters. The air, besides its aromatic sweetness, possessed that bracing freshness, which makes people fancy they have wings at their shoulders. In that vivacious state of the animal spirits which it induces one feels the weight of one's own body no longer, and enjoys therefore a condition of bodily health, which in our northern climates seems the privilege of children alone, who for that reason, in a large part, retain that bold and free grace of gesture so characteristic of the Greek. The Athenians wore upon their silver ornaments the national symbol of the grasshopper, by way of asserting their claim to be an autochthon race, that is, a race which had sprung from the Attic soil, not migrated thither from another land. After I had breathed the intoxicating air which floats over the "light soil" of Attica, I could hardly help fancying that the buoyant and joyous Athenian had consulted his bodily sensations as well as his

national vanity, when he chose for the type of his race that loud-voiced insect, without a burthen, who feeds but on sunshine and dew,—the

> "Little vaulter in the sunny grass,
> Catching its heart up at the feel of June." *

The animal races catch the contagion; and as we rode along that delightful spring morning my horse, a little flexible, riotous creature, seemed to snuff up oats in the air, and to gather strength from the breeze.

For five hours we pushed on through a country if possible more picturesque than beautiful. Its character on a sunny day is that of extreme variety, added to vividness of colouring: it is, however, when the sky is overcast, a thing of rare occurrence, that the mountains really look like mountains, and that a sort of soft and luxuriant grandeur becomes their character. In sunny weather the clearness of the air makes the colours so brilliant, and brings out details with such distinctness, that distance vanishes, and you fancy the remote mountain to be a hill

* Leigh Hunt.

hard by. As we rode along under the shadow of Hymettus, a mountain 3000 feet high, it looked so small, that I could easily understand the irreverent familiarity with which the old poets treated it, celebrating it rather for its bees and its honey than for any of those mysterious charms which make the poet of the north exclaim :—

> "The tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Haunted me like a passion."

After leaving the skirts of Hymettus we rode on through a region of olive-woods, whose opens were sprinkled with newly made gardens, and found ourselves soon in a broken waste of slightly undulating ground extending for miles around us, and hemmed in on every side by mountains. This is the plain of Athens. It is a shallow and all but barren soil, with little vegetation except that of the wild thyme, which carpets it thickly as heath, imparting a lavender hue to the tract hard by, and a violet shade to the distance. As we advanced the

scenery grew wilder and the vegetation more luxuriant. Gradually we entered a region sprinkled with pines of a species resembling the stone-pine, as well as with oak and ilex. The ravines became deeper and more numerous; and here and there we passed through thickets of arbutus in full flower, which reminded me of Killarney, though in Greece I have seen none comparable in size with those of Mucruss and Dinis. In a few minutes more our horses were wading through a stream which hardly reached their knees. It was the famed Cephisus. Close by is the village of Cephisia, girt by a few orchards, stunted olives, and almond-trees, and a few vineyards swathing some half-obliterated ruins, and hiding not so much the remains of a place once so celebrated, as the absence of remains. Cephisus was the native place of Menander, and the spot which Herodes Atticus, in the reign of Trajan, selected for the enjoyment of his learned leisure and meditative idleness. The gardens, porticoes, and terraces, with which he adorned it,—the baths and

streams with which he refreshed it,—the arcades which cooled those streams with their shadows, —all are gone; like the thoughts that chased each other in the brain of the philosopher, or the fancies that bubbled up in his imagination as he conversed here with his friends. Not far from this place is a spot of far deeper interest—Heraclé. Here Plato lived in his quiet and secluded farm. No trace now remains of the abode of the greatest of philosophers, and the man who perhaps, of all uninspired men, has exercised the largest and most beneficent influence among mankind.

The estate of my friend is certainly an enviable possession. It is situated in the heart of the mountain scenery of Attica. It lies at about an equal distance between the ranges of Pentelicus and of Parnes, the former rising to the height of 3500 feet, the latter of 4500. I specify the height of these mountains because it is a common mistake to suppose that Attica is a flat country, merely because it does not boast a Parnassus or an Erymanthus. On the

contrary, its two great plains, those of Athens and Mesogæa, are girdled by hills as high as any which Great Britain can boast. Mr. F.'s estate rises in some parts to an elevation of about 2000 feet, and is split into a labyrinth of picturesque defiles more numerous than I should have thought could exist within the space. The rugged soil is richly sprinkled with what is rare in Attica—magnificent oak-trees, at least as large as those which would have their fame in an English park. Between them stand, now singly, now in knolls, majestic broad-headed pines with trunks twisted into fantastic shapes by many a storm; billowy summits, and branches of "reverend grey-green" that bend beneath the weight of their cones. The rocks glitter with the brilliant green leaves and white blossoms of the arbutus; and the ravines are so tangled with thickets of broom, lentiscus, holly, ivy, cistus, wild-pear, juniper, tamarisk, thyme, and dwarf evergreen oak, that you are glad to follow a leader and tread where the goat has cleared a way for you.

We arrived an hour after sunset at Mr. F.'s residence, a modest but comfortable farm-house. Almost immediately adjoining it is a village built for his labourers, the country being so disturbed that the peasantry are afraid of living in scattered abodes. Close by is a pretty garden, already planted with orange-trees and flowers, as well as with the more utilitarian classes of vegetables. My friend showed his new improvements with no small pride; and, indeed, it is impossible not to feel a deep interest in watching the progress of a country which, though rich in ancient monuments, yet remains, with reference to the conveniences of life, as completely in a wild state as New Zealand can be. A large part of the heath is already turned into corn land; but Ceres—like some other recent potentates—can claim only to be a constitutional monarch here, and her sway is not only limited, but ill-assured. Nature in this wild region, "though vanquished, still retires with strife," and keeps up a not unequal battle with the industry of man. The anemones and narcissi,

when I visited the spot, forced their way unceremoniously up among the green blades of springing corn. Retrenched into one corner a little phalanx of jonquils held its ground against whole armies of barley and oats; and irregular squadrons of crocus and wild tulips effected a second lodgment in the newly-peopled land, or lingered long in the rear with a Parthian flight, scattering their seeds behind them instead of arrows. My friend led me in triumph through files of wild pears and plums, grafted with scions of a gentler kind, brought me to the trenches lately opened for the vines, boasted of the obdurate thorns he had eradicated, and of the subject almond-trees he had admitted to the freedom of his domain,—"the mighty we slaughtered, the lovely we spared,"—nor, indeed, could the sternest improver who had ever seen those almonds blossoming in their bowers, sometimes white as snow, sometimes rose-coloured like the same snow when flushed with sunset, condemn them to destruction for the sake of supplying their places with trim currant-bushes.

The household was in strict harmony with the estate. My friend laughed loud as he ran about performing for himself those offices which we, effeminate children of the west, require to be discharged for us by the hands of others. Even amongst us he would, however, have been an object of admiration as well as of wonder for his skill in wielding the pruning-hook. Many a modern country gentleman who does not know that Laertes, prince of Ithaca, wore goat-skin gloves to defend his hands from thorns when pruning his garden fruit trees, is yet proud of his skill in lopping his plantations. Such a person might however have stared at my friend when he laid down his pruning knife to hand a fat turkey to his cook, arranged the table himself, and then returned to his vines. Servants in Greece are not the least deficient either in courtesy or in kindness, a quality as necessary in a servant as a master; but in early periods of society the higher classes fortunately have not contracted the bad habit of helplessness. The custom of confounding helplessness with dignity is surely

one of the signs of a very barbarous civilisation; to use a phrase which, I believe, includes no contradiction. A Chinese mandarin cannot condescend to feed himself with his own fingers, though he does not actually think it necessary to eat by proxy. A very fine gentleman among us hardly considers himself able to walk, and would no more carry home in his hand a small volume which he had just bought in a book shop, than he would harness himself to a cab and draw it round Hyde Park. Once, I believe, it was thought a rather ignoble thing to be able to see well without a glass; whether indeed it has not sometimes been fashionable to be a little deaf, is more than I can say. The Greeks in old time had a different notion of dignity. Proud of bodily strength as well as of beauty they were not ashamed of offices which required manual skill. Princes alternately herded oxen and delivered the law; and royal virgins, who emblazoned in embroidery the wars of the giants and the histories of the Gods, were not above milking the cows. I confess there has always

been a great charm for me in this union of high refinement with simplicity. That surely was not an unpolished people whose sovereigns required no aid from pomp in order to retain respect; and whose villagers, shepherds, and fishermen could appreciate the poetry of Homer, as they sat in a circle around the wandering minstrel.

Our dinner over, we flung our pine cones on the fire, and, by its genial light, passed hour after hour in animated converse. The state and prospects of the country were our chief theme, and fortunate I thought myself in having met one so well qualified, both by ability and by his peculiar opportunities, to give me information. Large, indeed, and various are the interests which attach themselves to the political well-being of this little kingdom, which has so lately added, not only a new member, but a new race to the family of European nations. I must not, however, occupy your attention with a subject so complicated, and, above all, so constantly varying, as that of

Greek politics. The ecclesiastical relations of the country may one day re-act in a remarkable manner on the religious system of Europe. The Greek church is, perhaps, the only instance in Europe of a church, nominally, at least, independent alike of the Pope, of the State, and of popular interference. In that church, however, there are two parties. One of them, as is supposed, is devoted, in ecclesiastical matters, to the obedience of the Patriarch of Constantinople; and, in political matters, is not a little subject to Russian influence. This party consists, in a large measure, of the Bishops who, as the scandal goes, desire to be translated to the richer sees of the east. In the east, translations to the higher dignities are seldom, I fear, the reward of eminent sanctity. As seldom are they connected with learning, if report is to be trusted:—no one there wields the pastoral staff on account of the skill with which he has wielded the pen of the annotator; nor are bishoprics there among the rich fruits which grow from "Hebrew roots." The paro-

chial clergy, and the majority of the laity, are said to be much attached to the principle of ecclesiastical independence. If that independence should last, and should turn out conducive to spiritual good, it must surely have an effect, by its example, on the religious relations of western Europe. The Greek may, however, discover, like the Gallican church of the last century, that "liberties" are not always the way to liberty; that an extra-national centre is as often a support as a yoke; and that, if Church and State sit by the same hearth, the latter will contrive to get his legs at both sides of the fire. The marriage of the clergy prevents them from exercising any formidable political influence, and they possess the confidence and affection of the people, who rightly attribute their continued existence as a people to the common bond of a uniform religious faith.

The ignorance in which the clergy have remained during ages of slavery continues to a great extent still, owing chiefly to their poverty.

They are obliged to eke out their living as they may, and it happens frequently that the priest, who is a blacksmith or ploughman as well as a clergyman, has to leave his iron on the anvil, or the ox in his stall, while he celebrates divine service in the church hard by. As a necessary result, superstitions of all sorts have insinuated themselves into the popular belief. Far from withstanding, the clergy commonly partake of these. Their knowledge of religion is too often confined to an acquaintance with its ceremonial. That ceremonial, however, is not therefore to be deemed the cause of those superstitions; on the contrary, it may well be doubted whether for whatever knowledge of Christian Theology they retain both clergy and laity are not almost exclusively indebted to that venerable ritual which has embalmed the most important doctrines and facts of Christianity.

This ignorance is becoming, however, a more dangerous thing than it once was. The higher classes, having seen a great deal of the world, in consequence of their recent political changes,

and the number of foreigners who visit Athens, and having picked up a good deal of ill-digested knowledge, with a rapidity which is hardly consistent with that grave process, the crystallisation of knowledge into wisdom, are growing impatient of ecclesiastical authority, especially when vested in the hand of an ignorant clergy. The young men, I fear, are somewhat infected with sceptical opinions, a circumstance which may in some measure be accounted for by the attention paid to French literature. The Greeks extend their political antipathies to the language of Germany: nor, indeed, do I think it likely that, with a temperament and intellectual structure so opposed to the Teutonic, they could, even if free from prejudice, have attached themselves to the German literature. They are accustomed to clear air; they dislike what gives them trouble; and the whole cloud region of verse and prose they would willingly abandon to the Ixions of literature. They are jealous of the Italian language likewise, and have taken great pains, not without success, to eradicate from their

own the many words of Italian origin which had crept into it. Few Italian or Turkish words now remain; but the former tongue had, in the Ionian islands, almost superseded the native; and the Greeks being proud of their language as of their country, so recent a yoke has, of course, left a disagreeable impression behind.

The consequence of these literary antipathies is that the Greeks have been thrown upon French, a language with which nearly all of the wealthier classes in and about Athens are acquainted; and that French novels are the works which chiefly abound in the book-shops. Can one imagine a greater misfortune, especially to so young a nation? The French themselves may be in some measure acclimatised as regards the worst part of their modern literature;—indeed poison itself loses its efficacy when men have become slowly accustomed to it: and at all events they retain the glories of their ancient literature, in which they can take refuge from the pollutions and insanities of that most prominent of late. But in the case of a young nation, what a calamity

to be introduced to the boundless regions of intellect and fancy with a mountebank for a guide! How far must it not tend to remove them at once from revealed truth, and from the truth of Nature! In what a labyrinth of conventional fancies does it not threaten to ensnare them, and in what a swamp of unsound sentiment to engulf them! How little favourable must such an influence prove to a just appreciation of that literature of which the Greeks are called upon to take possession as lawful heirs! To read Sophocles just after laying down Alexander Dumas and Paul de Kock, must be like turning on a beautiful picture an eye dazzled by a conflagration, or trying the flavour of Falernian wine, sealed up "Consule Planco," with a palate exasperated by raw spirits. I have some hope, however, that the shrewd wit of the Greek may discover the cheat passed off on him, and that the truthfulness of passion and of nature which belongs to his race may revolt from the artificial and the fantastic.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARATHON.

The neighbourhood of Athens—Site of Aphidnæ—Expedition to Marathon—The plains of Marathon—The tumulus—Influence of the battle of Marathon on Greece—Wars not unmixed evils—Assistance rendered by the God Pan to the Greeks.

THE day after our arrival at Mr. F.'s we spent in riding about the neighbouring country, sometimes in search of antiquities, sometimes, for on such occasions we soon turn epicures, in search of views yet more beautiful than those which met us everywhere. It would be difficult to describe, and not easy to forget, the ravines smothered in arbutus that we pushed our way through, the promontories, shaggy with spreading ilex, that we wound around, and the glorious and jubilant views that we contemplated, now of the sea-like plain of Athens, now of the broad and azure sea. I speak of the plain of Athens as if it were flat, for such it appears when looked

down on from the heights which we ascended, but it has in reality nothing in common with the Campagna of Rome, which—admirably in character with its position—is as level as the outer court of a palace. The plain of Athens is nearly everywhere undulating in surface, is pierced with little narrow glens, and hollowed into wide green basins, decked with the softest vegetation and secluded like so many nests. The rivers that wind among the Athenian hills have a peculiar character of their own. They are but streams, except when swollen by sudden floods, and at this season there was seldom much difficulty in wading across them ; their windings, however, are as tortuous as the folds of a serpent and irresistibly attract the traveller to follow them through their dim ravines shadowed with juniper and ilex. From their sands, pure as pearl, rise luxuriant bowers of oleander, frequently about the size that hazel thickets attain among us. Depressed by their own weight, these empurpled copses lean across the stream which glides beneath

their massive flowerage in amethyst, instead of emerald.

The spot most remarkable for its historical associations which we visited this day was the site of the ancient Aphidnæ, the birthplace of Tyrteus, the lame minstrel, to whom Sparta owed its freedom, as well as of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the deliverers of Athens. Aphidnæ however has earlier records than these. It was the city in which Theseus concealed Helen, then not more than nine years old, whom he had carried off, and whom her brothers, Castor and Pollux, pursued and recovered. It is magnificently situated at the summit of a hill crowned with an oval platform of almost architectural regularity. Nothing more precious than a few fragments of ancient pottery has yet been found in its neighbourhood; but as no search but the most trivial has been made, we may still expect interesting discoveries from a spot which always remained among the most important of Athenian fortresses.

The morning after our visit to Aphidnæ we

mounted our horses again at about ten o'clock, and started for Marathon. The weather was beautiful, and the scenery, as we approached the plain, became gradually grander. The mountains opened out into simpler forms; the ravines widened into valleys; and beyond them swelled the sea, sometimes in wide expanse, but more often so cut by rocks, promontories, and the slopes of the nearer hills, as to look like a chain of lakes. After a ride of about three hours we reached the plain of Marathon, a worthy theatre for perhaps the most important battle which the world ever saw. The field is about six miles long and two broad: in shape it is tolerably regular, and is as flat as the sea that leans against it and, as Landor says,

"Level with the green herbage seems still higher."

On two sides it is hemmed in by the mountains of Attica, and on one by the loftier ranges of Eubœa, which, as we approached them, peered above their clouds, glittering with snow. Just far enough from the shore to be tinged with

blue, lies the island of Cea, the native place of Simonides, the tenderest, if tradition may be trusted, of all the Greek poets. How often must his songs, as well as the slenderer note of lark and thrush, have been heard on that plain which the Persian trumpet once shook! Their minstrelsy still remains; but we ask in vain for

"One precious tender-hearted strain of pure Simonides."

I thought of him when my eye first fell on the island, and again when, riding into the field which once echoed with onset of the Median cavalry, we heard all around no music more warlike than the bleating of the lambs and the cooing of the wild pigeons—perhaps the best accompaniment to songs like his.

Within about half a mile of the shore stands the tumulus raised by Aristides over the Athenians who fell in the action. It was from the top of this mound that we contemplated a spectacle the great associations of which were so strikingly contrasted with the scene beheld by the outward eye, characterised as that was

by a mingled expression of soft enjoyment and profound repose—such repose as follows a storm. The soil is here and there beginning, after its long sabbath, to minister again to human wants. A few patches, which the plough had opened, had begun to sprout with fresh blades of corn; but these exceptions did not jar upon the solemnity of the scene. A light breeze was gliding over the illuminated plain, and gently rippling the sea which flashed merrily beyond it with a blue light. It was just sufficient to refresh us after our ride, and to wave the anemones, crocuses, and jonquils, at the base of the mound, which was covered to the summit with the yellow asphodel, and a flower called *sphendone*, whose tall pink spikes stood erect in defiance of the breeze, and in whose flowers the bees murmured securely. As I stood on the triumphant funeral mound, and, looking round, contrasted that peaceful plain with the spectacle it must once have presented, a great black shadow passed rapidly along the ground, and my companion called on me to

look up. I raised my eyes in time to see an eagle aslant against the sky, and drifting away upon expanded wings to his mountain home. It was now time to return. I took the first good gallop I had had since I left home, on the plain of Marathon, and turned at last to leave it, at a more sober pace. Again we crossed the shallow rivers, startling the thrushes and blackbirds out of the brakes that bend across them (the nightingales had not yet made themselves audible), and stopping now and then to watch the progress of the violet shades as they stole down the distant glens, and the auburn lights more near, with which the rounded and heath-covered eminences seemed to burn.

We reached home about sunset, eat our dinner with a good appetite, thought we had earned it almost as well as if we had fought in the great battle of Marathon, instead of having only made a pilgrimage to the plain, and passed the evening discussing the effects of that battle, and all the affairs of the Eastern world,—Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Turkey, Greece.

How marvellously each of those countries was led on from small beginnings to great destinies; and how marvellously from each was its "candlestick removed," when it had done its part, and shown itself incapable of doing more! None of these countries perished without leaving to the world a great inheritance:—it is on their bequests that we live, and out of their ruins that our social structures have been built. The old Latin adage, that a serpent is powerless till he has eaten a serpent, might be applied to nations. Every nation which has vindicated to itself any true greatness has absorbed, either politically, or morally and intellectually, some nation that had preceded it. The Greek intellect absorbed and assimilated all that was most valuable in the political and philosophic lore of nations further to the east, except Palestine. Rome in turn absorbed Greece; and Roman law with Teutonic manners (both fused together by the vital heat of Christianity), built up the civilisation of Mediæval Europe. The European common-

wealth thus inherited all that antiquity and the East had done and thought:—America inherits us. It was Bishop Berkeley who recorded in verse the fact that civilisation has ever rolled on in one great wave from the East to the West. Did he prophesy truly when he said "Time's noblest conquest is his last?" Time only can answer. In the meanwhile how nearly has the wave of civilisation gone round the world! When it has reached its western limit what will remain for it but that, rolling still forward, it should burst again on the shores of the eastern world. It is in vain I suspect that we send our missionaries and our books *backward* to the east. A retrograde course is not allowed us. On the other hand what new morning is not destined to burst over the world, when, the first great revolution completed, the second commences, and from populous cities and flourishing states on the shores of the Pacific, the great and developed European Mind breaks in sudden dawn upon the land of Confucius? That time cannot now be far distant—before

the year 2000 it must, judging from the rate of progress at present observable, be at hand. The millenarians might find in this circumstance a philosophical confirmation of their reveries with respect to the new era which is to set in all over the world when the 6000 years since Adam are completed, and the Sabbatical thousand has commenced.

Strange and stirring is the reflection that all which Greece has done for the world,—in other words, all that the world now is, would never have existed if the battle of Marathon had been lost;—perhaps we might add, if it had never been fought. It was Persia that created a historic and developed Greece, and changed into vigorous nations the secluded tribes previously contented, for the most part, with a narrow and inglorious life within their several cantons. The Persian invasion combined them, made them feel their power, made them know their name, encompassed with the golden ring of Hellenic unity their various and often contending races. The Persian invasion at the

same time stimulated them to a general emulation; for it acquainted each with its strength, and introduced it into a region of glory, in which all strove as athletes in the Olympic games. The Persian invasion developed their intellect in awakening their moral energies. Never has the world witnessed a phenomenon so wonderful as the rapid expansion of the Athenian mind after the Persian war. The ten centuries which had elapsed from the days of Cecrops to those of Themistocles had left behind them little except legend and fable. In one century after that period the pent-up energies had fully flowered, and the widest development of intellect that the world has ever known had taken place. Athens had produced the statesmanship of Themistocles and Pericles;—the three great tragedians, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, had celebrated the mythic legends of Greece: Socrates had taught his countrymen, and Aristophanes had amused them: Plato and Aristotle had built up those two opposed philosophies, the essence perhaps of all that

the world has since done in metaphysics: Herodotus and Thucydides had written their histories; Phidias had sculptured his Jupiter, Pallas, and that Panathenaic procession which has ever remained the perfect model of Grecian art: Demosthenes had heard the heroic tale, and caught the fire. To these names how many more might not be added? The materials no doubt must have existed before, and centuries may have been needed to collect and to arrange them: but it was the Persian war which dropt upon the frankincense the one spark necessary to kindle the pyre and to light the sacrifice.

The progress of nations resembles that of individual men. In the history of individuals the severest trials notoriously supply the noblest opportunities; and the progress of years is often made in the brief effort necessary to withstand some extraordinary temptation, or subdue some external difficulty. Such are the compensations accorded in the moral world. Not less remarkable are those which belong

to the political. That roused energy with which a nation preserves its independence from foreign aggression, or redeems it when lost, carries it far across the frontier which it defends. Once taught the might that is latent in the human heart, it trusts itself, and that might is doubled. Every citizen, knowing that the eyes of all are upon him, labours as though the energies of all were compassed in his single breast—a whole nation becomes charged with that spirit which vivifies human hearts as a thunder storm is said to vivify the germs of vegetable life; and, moving as one man, multiplies its power a thousand fold by union. When the sword has done its work, enterprise and enthusiasm still demand their objects, and the intellect leaps from its sheath.

Marathon was not a glorious field alone: it was more useful than ever yet was factory, railway, or the richest land that Holland has snatched from the sea. There are many persons who rejoice in the prospect of a time when wars will be rendered impossible by the close com-

mercial relations which, as they anticipate, must one day bind nation with nation. I cannot say that this seems to me a very profound philosophy. Wars spring from the bad passions of men; and if they could be prevented by a gradual subjugation of such disturbing forces, no doubt there would then be much cause to rejoice in so auspicious a change. It does not follow, however, that nations would be the better if wars were suppressed by a merely external hindrance, such as the inconvenience of interference with trade. In the first place, a prolonged peace, thus artificially maintained, would probably produce internal discontents by denying the passions their natural outlet, and would thus promote that worst species of war, the civil war of class against class. In the second place, it would probably prevent a nation from recognising its great men, or even perceiving its need of greatness, whether hereditary, elective, or self-asserted. It is through its fears that a people feels love and reverence; and it is through external dangers that it is reminded

that it has external relations. Without marked and definite external relations a Nation does not properly exist as such. It may exist as a populace, and then it is like a herd of wolves; or as a people, and then it is an ox grazing in deep meads, and pacific, except when molested by the gad-fly; but it must have practical external bearings before it is elevated into that beautiful and brave war-horse, a Nation, and taught to glory in bridle and spur, and to "clothe its neck in thunder." It is only when it has graduated as a nation that a race completes its being, consummates its work, brings forth its perfect fruits of action, passion, thought, its arts and its sciences, as well as that great and scientific heroic poem, the hierarchy of an orderly society, ever changing, yet ever preserving its continuity.

As little philosophical does it seem to me, whether we regard the history of Greece or of any other country, to associate war merely with images of barbarism, violence, or folly. There is more of the pedagogue than of the thinker in

this compendious view of the matter. It is not borne out by fact. Dr. Johnson may affirm Alexander or Cæsar to have been no better than a robber on a large scale; but he could hardly deny that these remarkable specimens of the robber kind were often influenced by exalted motives, and inspired by the noblest intellects accorded to man (if we except the first class of contemplative minds); that heroism went beside them in their march, and that civilisation, religion, the triumphs of humanity, and the great designs of Providence, followed in their train. Had Britain repulsed Cæsar, the effort might perhaps have made it a nation: its failure affords us some grounds for concluding that it was better for her to become part of a great empire, which governed its dependencies wisely, than to preserve its savage independence. The failure of Xerxes, on the other hand, abundantly proves that he had no true vocation to be a conqueror of Hellas. The attempt was not, therefore, without consequences. His 400,000 soldiers turned out to be but an embassage sent

to inform the Greeks that it was time for them to be up and doing; that "arts, though unimagined, yet to be," demanded their birth; and that, ere long, there would be need of the philosopher who trained up Alexander. Even aggressive wars are not mere evils, reprehensible as they undoubtedly are, and with whatever sufferings they may be attended. For every such war there is a war of defence also; and such a war calls out and exercises all the nobler parts of our nature, patriotism, courage, the enthusiasm that takes a man out of himself and breaks through the chains of conventional littleness, the ardour that unites him to a great cause, the strong human feeling that makes him value blessings which he has discovered to be precarious, and all those manlier virtues which must perish if they be not employed, and in the absence of which man becomes a soft, effeminate, mechanical being, equally incapable of elevated thought and of genuine action. In fine, without denying that wars are evils, it is no paradox to maintain that we should be

worse without them, unless we could rise above them: and that for a moral disease, none but a moral could be the genuine cure. They are a part of man's chequered lot here below; and the vicissitudes to which they expose man are better than the dust and ashes of a Chinese civilisation. Human wars, no more than human loves, proceed merely from impulses common to man and the inferior races; they have their nobler as well as their inferior part:—for just indignation and vengeance, as well as mercy and love, have their antitypes above; and even in the unjust there is commonly a mixture of erring aspiration and right principle misapplied.

The fact that defensive wars are religious wars and assisted by religious sanctions, is in no instance more remarkably illustrated than in the glorious defence of Greece against Persia. Among the instances of supernatural aid by which the righteous cause was supposed to have been vindicated, perhaps the most remarkable was the interference of the god Pan, who had promised to leave his Arcadian retreats, and to

help the Athenians at Marathon. It was in commemoration of such aid that the Athenians dedicated to that pastoral, and not less mystical, divinity, the cave in the rocky foundations of the Acropolis which still bears his name. As I gazed on that cave, I could not but call to mind that the support which the Athenians believed they had received was no other than that to which Wordsworth appealed on behalf of the Tyrolese. The circumstance is a singular instance of that analogy of thought which is to be found in all places and at all times, when great minds are moved by great events. The deepest poet of modern times uttering, in his "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," his solemn and authoritative protest against the aggressive tyranny of Buonaparte, and exhorting each nation of Europe, in turn, to withstand that aggression to the death, admonishes them likewise that

> "The power of armies is a visible thing,
> Formal and circumscribed in time and place."

And bids them place their trust in that *universal* principle of Strength, Justice and Immor-

tality, of which the soul of man is the special abode, and of which Pan was a Pagan type.

" O'er the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal Pan,
But more exalted, with a brighter train.
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor stedfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain ?
Such doom awaits us—nay, forbid it, Heaven !
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death :—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality !

The day after our visit to Marathon we rode back to Athens by a road more rugged than any we had yet traversed. Bending towards the north it wound along the precipices under Mount Parnes, passing through every variety of glen and gorge. The day was overcast and eminently favourable for Athenian mountains, giving them an elevation not usually theirs. Nothing could be more charming than the glimpses we caught of peak beyond peak, and the long perspective of valleys opening out between the cloudy promontories of Pentelicus

and Hymettus. Never have I seen such a multitude of rainbows as in the Greek mountains. On this occasion the arch was seldom perfect. The prismatic colours commonly diffused themselves on the skirt of some driving cloud; or, tinging the mist just as it rushed in unending stream past its rocky barrier, advanced with it, as though the mouth of the valley was breathing fire. As we scaled the mountain side above the region of oak and pine, the steeps were covered with a luxuriant wood of arbutus in full flower, which sloped away for miles below us, and rose above us till the clouds hid them from our sight. On the higher parts of our mountain path their leaves were moulded with snow, and looked like the sculptured wreaths of the Parthenon. The moss which covered the projecting ridges of the rock were fringed, to the borders of the snow, with bright clusters of crocus and jonquil, yellow and blue, and little icicles hung in the caverned shadow of the crags, and let fall their diamond drops in the sun. On a circular hill, detached, but yet

part of the range of Parnes, we came to some ruined walls. Every ruin, however minute, in Attica is a monument; accordingly I asked my friend what he could tell me of that which lay before us. It was no other than Decelea, one of the chief Athenian fortresses, which the Spartans took possession of in the year B.C. 413, and in quiet possession of which they were allowed to remain for ten years, laying waste at will the country all around, until Athens itself became their prey. The position was so strong that it would not have been easy to dislodge them: on the other hand, it seems almost incredible, that the Athenians should year after year have pursued their usual avocations with an enemy established in the centre of their country, and not more than twelve miles from the capital. No doubt to that volatile race the circumstance, when no longer a novelty, ceased to be interesting. From that eminence the Spartans must almost have been able to watch the Panathenaic procession winding up the steep of the Acropolis, or the "Men

of Athens" flocking day by day to the temple of Bacchus. How often must a scornful smile have passed over the rigid features of a Spartan, awake to duty and asleep to art, as he witnessed a spectacle that involved, in as whimsical a form, a deeper moral than ever Aristophanes submitted to an audience of his countrymen. The men who flocked contentedly to the theatre with an enemy encamped within sight, were the sons and grandsons of those who had fought at Marathon! Above them rose the Parthenon and the statue of Pallas:—but, man is not always worthy of the works of his own hands.

Descending into the plain of Athens, we advanced rapidly toward our goal, and ere long the six temples of the metropolis began to define their outlines more clearly. Behind them, under a sky disordered with fleeting snow-racks, the sea stretched far away like a plate of silver. Round the sun a watery circle, like that which one often sees around the moon, extended, melting wanly away into a faint radiance. In a few minutes more we

were in the valley of the Cephisus. Ere long we had reached Colonos, and stood on the spot upon which Sophocles makes the blind Theban King take his stand. I tarried there for a little time and called to mind that chorus (it has few rivals even in Sophocles), in which the grove sacred to the Eumenides is described. The modern poet asks—

> Colonos! can it be that thou hast still
> Thy cypress, and thine olive, and thy vine? *

A few olive trees are still in the neighbourhood; but if all remained that the great tragedian describes, the mystic glory imparted to it by his imagination would equally be wanting. Again we rode on, and before long had passed the temple of Theseus, and reached the banks of the Ilissus, and the vast columns of the temple of Jupiter. And so ends my visit to Marathon. As a memorial of it I have carried off a stout walking stick of cedar cut upon the plain. Its ancestor, let us believe, gave a sound beating to a Persian.

* "School of the Heart, and Other Poems," by the Rev. H. Alford.

CHAPTER IX.

ELEUSIS.

Degree in which the physical characteristics of Attica moulded the Athenian character—Its shallow soil, its light air, its quarries, its mines—Its freedom from rapacious aggression, its dependence on maritime enterprise—The road to Eleusis—Athenian landscape—Ancient processions to Eleusis—Its position—Ancient remains—Character of the Eleusinian Mysteries—Ceremonies attached to them—Relation of the Eleusinian teaching to Christian doctrines—Paganism a witness to Christianity—Eleusinian Priesthood.

My sojourn at Athens was agreeably diversified by expeditions made in all directions within the neighbourhood, as well as by some more distant, each of which assisted me in understanding what lay before me. The more one sees of Attica, the more one perceives how admirably it was adapted to mould and foster the Athenian character. Its picturesque variety gave a genial impulse to the fancy, which in mountain scenery on a more imposing scale might have been overawed, and which the sublime expanse of Asiatic plains would probably

have overborne with the monotony of mystical reverie. Its shallow soil, while it exempted the Athenians from invasion prompted by cupidity, and thus gave their institutions time to develope themselves by a spontaneous and gradual process, bound them over also to industry, and severely tasked their ingenuity. It compelled them likewise to look on the sea and its islands as a part of their domain, and thus engendered not only the enterprise, but the spirit of liberty which are among the benefits of commerce and of colonisation. An agricultural population tends most to revere the prescriptive in institutions, a maritime to tempt the untried: the one attaches itself chiefly to the aristocratic and the hereditary, the other to the popular and the elective principle. It is the marriage of both principles which gives birth to order and to freedom, and therefore which most favours that expansion of moral energies, of which imaginative and intellectual triumphs are the flower and the fruit.

A great importance is likewise to be attached, I suspect, to the animating influence of that light and dry air which floats over a rocky soil. Milton, celebrating Athens, in that consummate passage of his "Paradise Regained," in which the kingdoms of the past world pass before his inspired eye, (as the kingdoms of a future world, seen from the "Specular Mount," pass, at the end of "Paradise Lost," before that of the angelic intelligence and the first Man), particularly remarks that its soil was light and its air pure. The fat rich plains of the adjoining Bœotia rewarded the husbandman with an ampler prize; and as "prayer and provender" are said not to hinder each other, it is noticeable that the sacerdotal caste as well as the aristocratic, found there its stronghold. Thebes, however, if it exiled no great men, produced but few. The difference between Bœotia and Attica in soil and climate, was much like that between Lombardy and Tuscany; and a corresponding dissimilarity is observable in their fortunes.

The same niggard soil which stunted the

Athenian olives disclosed those silver mines in the neighbourhood of Sunium, the produce of which, raised by the labour of slaves, (not citizens), enabled the Athenians to build and man that fleet which conquered Xerxes. Attica contained also in lavish abundance those marble quarries to which the sculptor and the architect were indebted for their materials. An inexhaustible supply of native materials is one of the first requisites for Art, which, without it, will be in danger of remaining ever but an exotic and a luxury. Germany, Belgium, France, England, in the middle ages, raised their cathedrals, for the most part, of the stone near at hand, and carved the wood that grew in their native forests. If we would again produce anything great we must learn to make the best of those materials within our own shores which at least do not double the cost of workmanship, and let Carrara rest in peace. At Athens the best and the cheapest materials were found together.

One of my most interesting expeditions was

made to the site of the ancient Eleusis, famous in old time for its mysteries. In many places remains are still traced of the road thither, which traversed the most beautiful region in the neighbourhood of Athens, issuing beyond the city walls into that district which contained the monuments of her greatest men, winding by the Platonic academy, and crossing the Cephisus. The scenery through which it passes is eminently noble and characteristic. The intensity of light in the south is perhaps that which chiefly causes the marked difference between the northern and the southern landscape, enlarging, as it does indefinitely, the sphere of vision in the latter. The amphitheatric breadth of Grecian scenery is increased by the circumstance that the woods commonly consist of olives or some other tree small in growth and undefined in colour, and, therefore, permit the eye to comprehend without interruption the extent of the open plain, and to wander, undiverted, to its mountain boundary sharply traced against a purple sky. Not only

are there few clouds, but there are seldom those vapours which give a semi-visionary character to our English landscape; you miss the bloom of that landscape, you miss its countless associations, its social allusions impressed by spire, manor-house, and cottage, the fair order of fields, the domesticity of guarded nooks; but you enjoy in the place of these an amplitude and majesty of which we know nothing. These are especially the characteristics of Attica, which consists, not of valleys, but of twelve wide plains or basins, each encompassed by its mountain walls, and most of them washed by the sea.

I often left the carriage on my way to Eleusis to mount an eminence and study the character of Athenian scenery. All around me lay a scene grave at once and lovely, and glistening in the sunshine with a brilliancy that made me rejoice that the predominant growth was not of a kind to reflect the sunbeans more fiercely than the lavender-coloured thyme. Gazing upon a scene expanded around you like a map, your eye is caught here and there by

a sparkling village, shining through, not screened by, its vineyards, cypresses, and perhaps a few palms; but the stony mountain ridges on the horizon no more recall to you the piny and jagged Alps, than the foreground reminds you of an English pasture, so truly "the fat of the land," as to be only a degree less animal than the herds that roam over it. Neither does the scene present anything like the exuberant richness of a Neapolitan landscape, with its gleaming orange-gardens, hedges rough with aloe and cactus, thickets of matted shrubs, and odorous trees trailed over with convolvulus and cistus. In the Athenian landscape, form is all in all: clearness, vastness, and simplicity are its main characteristics. There is infinite beauty in it, but comparatively little sentiment about it. The cloudiest day looks angry, not melancholy, and the sunshine pierces the storm.

It is as you approach Eleusis that you observe traces of that ancient road by which, year after year, the statue of Bacchus was carried from the Eleusinian temple to Athens and back

again, with myrtle crown and uplifted torch. In some places, and especially where the road skirts the sea, the stone pavement still remains, and, stamped in it, are the wheelmarks of the car that rolled over it 3000 years ago, and many a century earlier. On the cliffs close by, marks of the chisel are still to be seen, as well as little hollows carved in the rock, the cells in which votive offerings were once suspended. Along that road passed all the most illustrious of the Hellenic race, and many of the chief men (warriors, philosophers, consuls, priests, emperors) of Asia, of Africa, and of Rome. The shores of the Mediterranean, that Olympic stadium of the ancient world, sent thither, from Syria to Calpe, as offerings, not gold and frankincense, but the rulers to whom they had confided their destinies, and the seers by whom their intelligence was directed, zealous each and all of them to be initiated into the mysteries that gave promise of a future life. There paced Eschylus zealous and absorbed, and Horace ready to make the best of all chances, provided among

their number was neither lance nor sword. Eschylus was arraigned before the Areopagus on a charge of having partially revealed in one of his tragedies the secrets confided to him in the mysteries. What defence he made, we know not; but he might have replied that he was a poet, and that that is no poetry through which there sparkle out, even in the bard's despite, no flashes of Eleusinian lore. He might have added, that the mischief is the less formidable, inasmuch as the people are likely to be very little the wiser for any such revelations.

The road increases in beauty as it advances to the west. Leaving behind it the plain of Athens, it gradually ascends to a considerable height among the Eleusinian mountains, winding among broad and picturesque but sterile glens. At the summit of the pass you reach the remains of an ancient viaduct, as well as those of a large and interesting monastery of Byzantine architecture. This spot commands a glorious view of the sea close to Eleusis, the

purple expanse being completely shut in and framed by mountains. A long but gradual descent brings you to the shore, beside which the road extends in a single curve, passing through the plain of Eleusis, which is not less picturesque than that of Athens.

The ancient city of Eleusis stood on a gently swelling hill, glorious with the many monuments which adorned what may be accounted the "Holy City" of Greece—a city which stood to it in somewhat of the same relation that ecclesiastical Rome stood to medieval Europe. At the eastern extremity of its rocky platform rose the far-famed temple of Ceres, the largest in Greece, as well as the most venerable. It presented to the south a portico of twelve columns, and four rows of pillars divided the cella. Like the Parthenon, it, too, had its colonnaded Propylea, which stood in advance of its outer court. That temple exists no more. How or when it disappeared, history keeps no record. Everywhere in Greece one is astonished and afflicted by the total disappearance of

monuments, so built that they might have lasted as long as the world lasts. What can have occasioned so lamentable a disaster? Eleusis, I believe, was never fortified in modern times: there, then, the Turks required no lime for the construction of bastions. In many cases the obliteration has been as complete as if it had been effected by magic or some retributive miracle. Our loss, however, in this case, as in most others, is not unmitigated loss. The Grecian monuments, like the Sibyl's books, have become far more precious, because so large a proportion of them have been destroyed.

Eleusis has at least left significant memorials behind it. In almost every part of the modern village I came upon the remains of ancient walls, consisting of those prodigious blocks which the Greeks used in their buildings. On the platform of the hill which rises above that village, and commands the noblest view of the bay and the mountains around it, are the ruins of the temple itself. Not a pillar now stands; but the ground is strewn with fragments of their

shafts, as well as with capitals and blocks of the frieze. There can be little doubt that large discoveries of sculpture will be found in the neighbourhood of Eleusis, whenever any sufficient search is made. Already, indeed, they have filled a ruined church hard by with fragments of statues casually discovered in the neighbourhood. The want of funds is, no doubt, the great obstacle in the way of an effectual search. The reverence attached to such remains by the common people has, in some instances, been known to partake of a superstitious character. On one occasion they steadily resisted the removal of a statue of Ceres, affirming that its loss might imperil their harvests in future years.

We can of course discover little in detail of the Eleusinian mysteries, though we know that the splendid ceremonial in the temple, exhibited before the eyes of the initiated, was intended to impart in a symbolic form the deepest lessons to which ancient theology had attained, to illustrate a mystic philosophy of man, of life, and

of a life after death, and to dedicate the votary to a discipline of purity and virtue, as a pledge of his participation in that immortal life reserved for well-doers. It was deemed necessary for all persons to partake of this mystic initiation in order to insure their happiness in another world; and one of the charges brought against Socrates was, that with this duty he had never complied. The characters of those who presented themselves were severely scrutinised; and those charged with various crimes (among others, with homicide, though accidental) were excluded. The first day of the celebration was called by the name of *Assembly*, for on it first the worshippers were congregated together. The second day was called by a name signifying *Purification*, the votaries being obliged to bathe in the sea. The third day was devoted to *Sacrifice*, the priests themselves not being permitted on this occasion to partake of the sacrificial feast. The fourth day a solemn procession took place, in which the *Holy Basket* of Ceres was carried aloft. The fifth was called

the *Torch-day;* and on the night that followed it, people rushed over the hills with lighted torches, in memory of the search of Ceres after her daughter, and of the torch which she lighted at the flames of Ætna. The sixth day was called *Iacchus*, being especially consecrated to the mystic Bacchus, (the son of Jupiter and Ceres, not the Theban divinity,) who had accompanied his mother in her wanderings, bearing a torch in his hand, and whose statue was on that day carried in procession to Athens.

On the seventh day of the ceremonial, the votaries participated in solemn games, and the reward of the victor was a measure of barley, that grain having been sown first at Eleusis. The eighth day was called by the name of *Æsculapius*, the god of healing, who, as well as Hercules, had participated in the lesser mysteries. The ninth and last day was in its import the most deeply significant of all. It was known by the name of "*Earthen Vessels*," because on that day two such vessels were filled with wine, and placed, one to the east and the

other to the west, in the temple.[9] Mystical words were murmured over those vessels, after which they were both thrown down, and the wine spilt on the ground was offered as a libation.

The Eleusinian mysteries being intended especially as pledges of immortality were not unnaturally connected with the worship of the venerable and beneficent daughter of Saturn and Vesta. Her attribute, the blade of corn (the illustration used by St. Paul), was expressly held forth to the votary as a symbol, in its burial, its decay, and its regermination, of immortality. Still more strongly was the second life shadowed forth in the tale of Proserpine, daughter of Ceres, who, though snatched to the kingdom of Shades, was yet, through Jove's permission, restored annually to her mother, and allowed to breathe, during half the year, the upper air. In such close connection with Proserpine was Ceres contemplated in these mysteries, that the only name she bore in them was that of Αχθεια, or *the Mourner*. I know

not whether in any other part of Greek religion there was so close a recognition of the divinity of Sorrow. In every part of these mysteries with which we are acquainted we find marvellous traces of that Sibylline insight possessed by the ancient world, which the early doctors of the Church regarded as an inferior sort of inspiration, accorded in order to prepare the pagan mind for the truth. The most remarkable of the allegories which belonged to the Eleusinian worship was assuredly that of the broken earthen vessels and the wine poured out in oblation, especially if we call to mind Bacon's exposition of the earthen vessel in which Hercules was said to have crossed the sea,—an allusion (as our great inductive philosopher asserts) to that frail mansion of the flesh, the "body prepared" for One who in the more terrestrial aspect of his sacred deeds and sufferings was prefigured by the divine hero, warrior, and deliverer of antiquity.

There were countless significant allusions in these mysteries, or rather in that slight portion

of them with which we are acquainted, which might indeed challenge a deep attention. The sacred mysteries were recited to the initiated after their purification, from a book called Πετρωμα, because it was made of two stones fitly joined together. After this instruction certain enquiries were catechetically made of every man, to which he returned answers. The chief Hierophant called out with a loud voice, commanding the profane to depart, the whole company standing at this time in the vestibule of the temple. The glorious spectacle in the interior of the temple, which was flooded with light, and in which the Eleusinian philosophy of heaven and earth was exhibited in vision before the eyes of men whose brows the priests had bound with myrtle, in allusion to the bowers of the Blessed, was called by the name of Αυτοψια, or *Intuition.* During the celebration of the mysteries it was forbidden to arrest a debtor or to present any petition. In order to abolish on this occasion all distinction between the rich and the poor, Lycurgus pronounced it unlawful

for any one to make his approach to Eleusis in a chariot. The votaries were not allowed to draw nigh unto the shrine of the Mourner, kind to man, and to whom they owed the gift of their daily bread, without having under their feet the Διος κωδιον, or *Jupiter's Skin*, that is, the skin of a victim offered to the supreme God. Not a little remarkable is it that the highest and purest doctrines of Greek mythology should thus, in connexion with its loftiest hopes, and its most stringent moral precepts, have been revealed to the purified, in the temple, common and indivisible, of those two divinities, who, interpreted in their elemental or physical relations, signify Bread and Wine.

Those who are attached to mystic interpretations will not fail to discover an occult meaning in the Eleusinian Priesthood, as well as in the mysteries it celebrated. The chief of that priesthood was called *Hierophantes*, or *Revealer* of sacred things. He was always an Athenian citizen: his office was held for life; and he was obliged to live in celibacy, and to

devote himself wholly to the service of the Gods. He was accounted a type of the unknown Creator of all things. He had three attendants. The first was called *Torch-bearer*, and considered a type of the Sun, the Enlightener, the Slayer of the Serpent, the Harmonist, and the Physician. The second, called *Herald* or *Crier*, was deemed a type of Mercury, the Messenger of Heaven, and Interpreter of the Gods; the God of Eloquence and Persuasion, who glided through the universe, invisible, or in any changing shape, with the speed of thought, and conducted the Souls to their abodes below. The third, who was especially the Ministrant, was called "*He at the Altar*," and regarded as a symbol of the Moon—that luminary which some of the ancient doctors compared with the Christian Church, because it is the lesser Light, ruling the night, and reflecting the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Besides these sacred personages, there were others also; among them *a Master of the Ceremonies*, who was always one of the

Archons, and four *Curators* elected by the people. Of these, one was always chosen from the sacred family of the Eumolpidæ, the descendants of Eumolpus, by whom the Eleusinian mysteries were instituted. In this part of the priesthood the hereditary element was therefore included, and the chain remained unbroken for 1200 years. The chief sacrifices offered were a mullet, and a little barley severed from the holy soil of Eleusis.

How are we to account for the extraordinary analogies between truth and fiction—between the guesses of the pagan intelligence and the Christian Revelation? That is too long and too grave a question to be discussed here: one observation, however, is so closely connected with the Eleusinia, that it need not be suppressed. There are persons who object to many things in the ceremonial, the discipline, or the government of the Christian Church, on the ground that they are analogous to much in the pagan rites, and, therefore, probably proceed from the same cravings of the

unregenerate imagination. Such matters may or may not be objectionable; but this argument against them, too often inadvertently used, is one which would undermine Christianity itself. It is not to Christian Rites only that we find analogies in ancient religion, but to Christian Doctrines likewise, and to many of the doctrines included in the Creed itself. "If the Rites are but plagiarisms," the sceptic will say, "why not the Doctrines too? You disclaim the Eleusinian lustration, and scorn the successive priesthood; are you prepared to reject also the doctrines emblemed in the broken vessels and the wine shed abroad." In all these matters there is but one question for a reflecting mind; namely, was the later Religion a patchwork of those which had preceded it; or were the early religions of the world, on the contrary, attempts to feel after a truth congruous with man's nature, and intended from the first to be revealed to him? On all grounds of philosophic reasoning, the latter solution seems to be the true one; while

the former, if fairly analysed, is about as reasonable as the Epicurean notion that the world derived its being from a concurrence of atoms existing from all time. That Religion from the first intended for man was necessarily in harmony with man's nature, and the object of man's desire. Whatever was deepest in the human heart, and highest in the human mind, sympathised with and aspired after that Religion, which (human only because Divine) is the legitimate supplement of human nature, as well as its crown. To infer that Christianity is but a combination of human inventions, because it satisfies the more elevated human instincts, is about as reasonable as a moral philosophy would be which accounted for the maternal affection by concluding it to arise from a recollection of the pleasure the child had found in her doll, or which supposed that human polities had resulted from a minute observation of the Ant-hill and the Bee-hive. That surely is not a sound philosophy, which, like a concave mirror, inverts the objects placed before it,

confusing type and antitype, and assuming that whatever came first in the order of time, comes first also in the order of thought and moral reason.

Whence, then, arose those anticipations, as might seem, of many Christian doctrines and practices? Are they to be considered simply as the noblest exertions of the human intellect inspired by that moral sense which, however inadequate to support our feeble will, has yet been able to maintain itself, and, so far as it goes, runs, in its smaller circle, parallel with Revelation? Or are they traditions—broken fragments of that patriarchal religion which preceded the Jewish, and was connected by it, as by an isthmus, with the Christian? No doubt they are to be referred to both sources. We find remarkable traces in the Eleusinian mysteries of traditions later than the patriarchal, especially in the history of their supposed founder. He lived about a century after the great Hebrew legislator.

That founder was Eumolpus, son of Neptune

and Chione. His mother, desirous to conceal his birth, threw the infant into the sea; but his life was preserved by Neptune, who carried him into Æthiopia, where he was brought up by an Æthiopian woman, whose daughter he afterwards espoused. An act of violence compelled him to fly from Æthiopia; and he took refuge in Thrace, the king of which country received him hospitably, and gave him his daughter in marriage. After conspiring against his father-in-law, he was once more obliged to fly, and found an asylum in Attica, where he was initiated in the sacred rites of Ceres, and constituted Hierophantes, in the year B.C. 1356. Having been reconciled to his father-in-law, he inherited his kingdom, and thus united in his person the royal and the sacerdotal office. Erechtheus was at that time king of Attica. Between him and the great high-priest of Eleusis there gradually arose that jealousy which from the time of the Judean kingdom to the Papal has so often divided the civil and ecclesiastical powers. They met in battle, and

both were slain. Peace was concluded on the terms that the royal office should ever remain in the family of Erechtheus, and the sacerdotal in that of Eumolpus. The kingly power ceased with Codrus in less than 300 years from the time of that treaty: the priesthood remained with the Eumolpidæ for 1200 years. The Eleusinian Mysteries themselves lasted for about 1800 years. In the reign of Adrian the ritual was transferred from Eleusis to Rome. It was abolished by Theodosius the Great.

CHAPTER X.

THE PEIREUS—ATHENS.

The Peireus—Disappearance of the ancient fortifications—Incompleteness of History—Ruined Temple near the Peireus—Tomb of Themistocles—Greek Politics—Small progress which the nation has made—Greek education—Mr. Hill—An Athenian school—Greek hymns and music—A Philhellenist—The modern language—its relations with the ancient—Advantages which modern Greece may derive from her ancient literature—Benefit from select study.

THERE are few things in the neighbourhood of Athens more worthy of note than the harbour of the Peireus, and the two adjoining ports, with which Athens was united by the lines of fortification executed under the rule of Themistocles and of Pericles. Along the line of coast, which, including its indentations, extends for about six miles, considerable remains exist of the ancient walls and towers. Like most Athenian ruins, they consist of huge blocks of stone put together without cement, and consolidated by their own weight only. Unfortunately, but little care has

been taken of these interesting remains, many parts of which have supplied materials for recent buildings. There is still, however, traced a continuous mass of wall along the margin of the sea, and within the peninsula, connecting the most easterly bay with the "long walls" of Themistocles. The ancient town of the Peireus extended over the whole space between the inner wall and the sea, as well as round the harbour which retains the name. It was as populous as Athens itself, and may be considered as part of the same city; for between the walls by which the two were joined, it is probable that there was a succession of houses.

The total fortifications of Athens must have been about twenty-two miles in length. The scale on which they were built we may infer from what we read of the walls of Themistocles, which were five miles long, each, sixty feet high, twenty broad, and five hundred apart from each other. How marvellous that such walls should ever have disappeared, and how plainly does not the ignorance under which we labour

concerning the causes which led to the overthrow of monuments, the subversion of which must have cost more persevevering industry than the subversion of many a kingdom has done, demonstrate the fragmentary as well as the illusory character of that muse-indited newspaper—History. The history of the ancient world may, perhaps, one day be written. Every little discovery of medal or coin supplies us with materials which those who come after us will know how to apply, each in its place: and the mere lapse of time cannot be deemed of paramount importance in the matter, considering the extreme difficulty with which we ascertain the truth respecting occurrences not a year old. Philosophers assure us that a man never finally forgets anything which he has known; and that all that has been swept by the current of daily life into some odd angle of the soul is sure to make its appearance again. The human Race, also, doubtless will be allowed to recover the lore it has lost, and to contemplate, from a height, that course — so erratic, so broken, so

often retrograde — which it has traced during its sojourn on this planet. In the mean time, the traveller in the East is constantly reminded of the fact that countless events, as wonderful as those recorded by the chronicler, must have taken place on ground with the annals of which it pleases us to fancy ourselves familiar. If we encountered a city in the Punjaub girt with such fortifications as those of Athens, should we think it necessary, for our own security, so completely to destroy them, that the traveller should grope for their site with a map in his hand? Should we not think of the expense first? To have obliterated the walls of Babylon must have cost more labour than to have built the metropolis of many a modern nation. Yet in our compendious views of history, we think it sufficient to say, "The city being taken, its fortifications were dismantled, in order to render future resistance impossible."

Whoever can content himself with trivial remains of great things will, notwithstanding, be interested by the fragments of the "long

walls," as well as of the towers by which they were strengthened at intervals. On a promontory that projects into the sea, there are also ruins of a temple without name or history. To the height of six feet, some of the pillars, which are not fluted, remain erect; and portions of the others lie scattered around. It is not surprising that this temple should have given way; for its base is hardly raised above the level of the sea, which rushes, blue and green, up to its feet, and drenches in showers of rainbow-misted foam its dark and rifted shafts.

Close to this temple, remains what is called, and justly, we may guess, if the account given by Pausanias is to be relied on, the tomb of Themistocles. It consists merely of an oblong hollow carved out of the rock, and lapped against by the sea, which it engulphs with a complacent, half-plausive sound. A legend, if no more authentic tradition clung to the spot, would more probably have called it the bath of a Nereid than the grave of an hero. Notwithstanding, the Athenians, who understood what

was decorous and fit, did well in interring their great statesman by the element he had loved, and over which he had given them the mastery. They had exiled him it is true, but not until they had allowed him, what probably he chiefly desired, a sphere for his greatness, and the means of serving his country.

Ignorant and petulant censors, and some of a better class, are moved over much by the petulant and ignorant ingratitude of the people towards their benefactors. Benefits which have been felt by the poor at their hearths are commonly not forgotten, and are never resented; for these come home to the individual being, and of these the motive is seldom open to misconstruction. Benefits of a larger kind affect the masses of the people; but as the masses, be they grateful or ungrateful, possess neither the corporate existence and continuity of a nation, nor the personal life of an individual, so they should sustain an inferior responsibility. A statesman worthy of serving his country will think that the people have

acquitted themselves well by him if they have allowed him to serve it. If fame be anything, a great man's reverse is that which crowns his fame, and marks him with blight and blast apart from the crowd of the prosperous. The greater is not blessed of the lesser. Themistocles had saved his country and brought down the pride of Xerxes:—what more could his countrymen have done for him (more for themselves they might have done) than to have allowed his bones to repose in his native land?

Not far from the tomb of Themistocles a monument has been erected to the Greek Admiral, Miaulis, for his merits in the late war of independence. It stands close to that plain which is memorable from the defeat of the Greek forces under Lord Cochrane and General Church. To any one who examines the ground their defeat is explicable enough; in a large measure it is attributed to the chivalrous impetuosity of Lord Cochrane, who, notwithstanding, is said to have displayed extraordinary talents in the war. The Greeks

were originally in possession of the heights, but were induced or forced to relinquish this advantage by Lord Cochrane, who was tired of inaction and had resolved to eat his dinner on the Acropolis, at that time closely besieged. Without cavalry to oppose to that of the Turks, and without bayonets to resist their charge, the native forces, which numbered about 12,000, were broken almost at once on advancing to the plain, and driven back with great slaughter, several of them swimming to the ships.

The state of society at Athens has in it much to interest those who are not exclusively dependent on social conventionalities. In its small compass you meet representatives of most countries in the east as well as the west; while the native population, in the midst of their unchangeable monuments, are obviously, both as to character and manners, in a state of transition as rapid as could have characterised a Greek colony in old times. How long the present order of things may last no one can guess, nor whether it will be

succeeded by a better or a worse. Hitherto Greece has made small progress as a nation compared with what was expected: how far those sanguine expectations were reasonable is another question. That want of progress is attributed by one party to the early lack of popular privileges, and by another to a deficiency of executive vigour. In the meantime it is certain that privileges are conducive to the public good, simply in proportion to the honesty and virtue which can be called in for their exercise;—and equally certain that a strong hand should be a steady and a just one. To a young country especially may be applied the well-known adage on the subject of forms of Government, "whiche'er is best administered is best." Whether the Government originally instituted in modern Greece had been an absolute or a constitutional Monarchy, or a Republic, it would have equally amounted to the trial of an experiment without precedent in ancient Greek history, in which we read of no form

of centralisation, but of States politically independent, municipally self-governed, and united by a very slight bond of confederation, but by strong ties of race, religion, language, and manners.

Whether it would have been possible to have again tried the experiment of antiquity, who can say? Who can tell whether the system of ancient Greece would have worked well of old, if, instead of having grown up spontaneously, it had been the result of an external arrangement made by foreign nations? Who indeed can guess whether in any case it could then have succeeded, if Greece, instead of being girt around by comparative barbarians, and thus consolidated into a practical unity, had been surrounded by nations who had outstripped her in civilisation, each of whom would have vied with the others in a policy of intermeddling, and the most aggressive of whom was the only one connected with her by a common religion? Be this, however, as it may, I hardly understand what reason the more

sanguine Philhellenists had to entertain those lofty expectations which have confessedly been disappointed. In the settlement of the Greek kingdom there was one "original sin." Unfortunately Greece had not been able to work out her independence by her own unassisted energies. This circumstance was in itself a proof that she was not yet in all respects ripe for independence, although the struggle itself had doubtless done something to prepare her for it. As a necessary consequence a Government was prescribed for her by the States which had given her, as they supposed, her Liberty;

> "A gift of that which is not to be given
> By all the blended Powers of Earth and Heaven."

A nation, however, like a poet, "nascitur, non fit." Those who give on such occasions seldom know how to give good gifts; and those who receive seldom know how to work good out of evil, or even to use good without abusing it. Greece must have patience, and her destinies will shape themselves according to her internal

needs, of which she probably knows about as little as her advisers. If I order a coat of a tailor who never saw me, I must not expect to be perfectly fitted, and have some reason to be contented if I can keep it on my back. Every beast in the forest has a coat that fits him; but then he is at the trouble of growing it.

I took but little interest when at Athens in those petty disputes and jealousies of the "Russian party," the "English party," and the "French party," which are dignified by the name of Greek politics. I saw no reason to imagine that Greece had yet graduated sufficiently in that severely practical thing—a political education—to possess any politics: I doubted even whether her parties were quite worthy of the name of parties, and I felt pretty well convinced that the petty lore of her factions was much too complex for a foreigner to understand. This circumstance is fortunate for you as it was for me. Having picked up no gossip I have none to retail. If

you want the last report or the most recent scandal you will find them best and freshest in a newspaper. Greek politics are stale in a week, for no large principles are involved in them. If you do not drink the milk warm from the cow, you must have a credulous palate to enjoy it.

Greek politics, being in reality a question of the future, not of the present, will depend mainly on Greek Education. For knowledge the Greeks have an ardent thirst, like the Irish; and their apprehension is so quick that they can master in a few months what others would require years to learn. Whatever amount of progress they may one day reach, they will always have cause to look back with gratitude to the efforts made on their behalf by Mr. Hill, an American Missionary of the Episcopal Church, who was, I believe, one of the earliest settlers at Athens, and to whom the cause of Education there probably owes more than to any one else. Mr. Hill came to Athens as a Missionary—directly, of civilisation and sound morals — indirectly, of

course, of religion also. He early perceived the futility of all attempts to withdraw the Athenians from their own Church, and was also too orthodox to endeavour to create a schism in a communion in which all the great truths of Christianity are maintained, in combination with the ancient ritual and ministry, though also in combination with many superstitions, the result of much ignorance. Accordingly, for years he devoted himself to the great cause of Education. The clergy did not prohibit their flocks from reading the Holy Scriptures, or from receiving religious instruction on subjects not controversial. His influence soon became great, and assuredly has been beneficent.

I visited, with equal surprise and satisfaction, an Athenian school which contained 700 pupils, taken from every class of society. The poorer classes were gratuitously instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls in needlework likewise. The progress which the children had made was very remarkable ; but what particularly pleased me was that air of bright alert-

ness, and good-humoured energy, which belonged to them, and which made every task appear a pleasure, not a toil. The greatest punishment which can be inflicted on an Athenian child is exclusion from school, though but for a day. About seventy of the children belonged to the higher classes, and were instructed in music, drawing, the modern languages, the ancient Greek, and geography. Most of them were at the moment reading Herodotus and Homer. I have never seen children approaching them in beauty ; and was much struck by their Oriental cast of countenance, their dark complexions, their flashing eyes, and that expression at once apprehensive and meditative which is so much more remarkable in children than in those of a more mature age.

The singularity of the spectacle was increased by the mingled character of enjoyment and decorum that belonged to it. The dresses of the children, many of which were of the national costume, looked as spotless as their pale radiant faces, and as carefully arranged as their hair,

which was almost always dark, and glistening in its heavy masses. Their gestures were eager at once and graceful, and their demeanour was full of reverence. Never have I seen such brows, and such nobly-shaped heads. These are, perhaps, the highest characteristics of Greek beauty; but they are especially observable in children, and give them a certain rapt and inspired air. As I walked among them, I could hardly help asking "Which is to be the future Pindar? That girl, does she not come from Tanagra: does she not boast that Thermodon is clearer than Ilissus; and is not her name Corinna?" Many of these children spoke English, and conversed eagerly about their studies. One of them in particular, a beautiful orphan from Crete, adopted by an American lady, to whom the Athenians owe much, expatiated, with brightening eyes, and a fairer dawn of intelligence on her brow, about the pleasure she had had in reading Plato! Some of their drawings seemed to me to indicate much genius; and there is no branch of their

education which they enjoy so much. Their singing master was an old Greek, who had passed many years in Germany, but who abated nothing of his vivacity on that account. If he was as dry as a cricket, he was as merry likewise. This old man seemed, indeed, to have gathered a double portion of his country's vivacity from the abundance of youthful life around him, and was never tired of singing among his pupils, whose confidence he had plainly won, and who clustered about him like birds upon a sunny old fruit-tree half bare.

I was asked to come again on Sunday evening, and attend their devotions, which are of a very musical character—an invitation that I did not require to be repeated. Before I had reached the threshold, a loud, clear chaunt from the upper part of the building struck upon my ear. Guided by the sound, I made my way easily to the "upper chamber," which they used as their chapel. A little girl advanced to meet me, with a frank courtesy, and placed in my hand, with the ready smile of

a child's hospitality, a Greek prayer-book, open at the place where they were engaged. It was a prayer from one of those old Greek Liturgies, which rank among the grandest of human compositions. The prayer concluded, the infantine congregation rose and chaunted in Greek the whole of the *Te Deum*. If the legend be true which attributes to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine that hymn which so marvellously combines the Creed, the Psalm, and the Prayer:—if it be true that, at the baptism of the latter, the two saints were seized with a common impulse, and recited that hymn, composing it as they proceeded, in alternate verses—they might have recognised an exultation not less fervent than that which they had themselves felt, if they had heard it chaunted by that youthful and jubilant choir. The passion of the south is a glorious thing when it is worthily directed:—it is then a light that illumines the intellect, and a searching heat that makes purity more pure. I well understood, on that occasion, why it is that in those lands where, commonly,

pleasure is too eagerly pursued, sanctity has also reached its highest elevation; building, like the eagle, its nest on the summit of the mountain-walls whose base is hidden in myrtles.

Impassioned exultation was the chief characteristic of the song carolled by those dark-eyed cherubs. The nightingales in the mystic grove of Colonos, which allayed the heart and sounded the requiem of the blind king about to find rest at last in the Shades, had neither so impetuous nor so solemn a note. Certainly those children sang to God, and not merely "to the praise and glory of God, part of the 119th Psalm." In this respect their anthem illustrated what everything in Greece reminds us of, the extreme objectivity of the Greek character. Nothing human however is perfect, and I must add that there was occasionally not a little harshness in the music, owing to its extreme loudness, and to the fact that those youthful voices were not mellowed by the intermixture of any graver tones.

Among the benefactors whom the Greeks will long have reason to remember is a Scotch

gentleman, of the name of M——. He visited Greece first as a Philhellenist, and practised, at Athens, as a lawyer, for some years after the independence. At first he was Attorney-General at Athens; but he did not sympathise sufficiently with the politics of the Government to make it desirable for him to retain that post. For a considerable period he used to plead in the Greek courts, speaking the language with as much facility as the natives, with whom he was deservedly a favourite. His efforts for their improvement were chiefly of a literary character. At one time he established a periodical work at Athens, and published also translations from some of our orators and preachers. The latter are interesting specimens of the degree in which the modern Greek may be made to approximate to the ancient, composed as they are with a skilful adaptation of the ancient grammar to the genius of the modern language.

It is the opinion of many persons, better qualified to express one than I can be, that the

Greek language may one day be brought back to something not unlike what it was in old times. As for the pronunciation they stoutly maintain, that such as it is now it can be proved to have been in the time of Constantine, and that it probably was never very different. It is difficult to determine what may originally have been the sound of the vowels; and as for the quantity of the syllables, a musical recitative may have assisted the reciter of Greek poetry over metrical difficulties which to us would seem insurmountable. I can hardly, however, regard the restoration of the ancient language as a thing possible; nor is there much reason to think that, even if possible, it would be desirable. The early literature cannot in its own way be rivalled, and would only be vulgarised if its language were parodied. What the Greeks should aspire after is the complete purification of the modern language, and the gradual building up of a literature as analogous to the ancient as Italian literature is to the Latin.

I was glad to find that, in all the schools, the study of the ancient languages was much attended to. The modern tongue has been much improved by the weeding out of Turkish and Italian words, and by the partial restoration of ancient forms of construction. Fortunately, the Greeks possess no Grammar except the ancient, a knowledge of which is thus rendered absolutely necessary for the educated. It remains to be seen whether the different genius of ancient and modern times, and a corresponding moral diversity in mind and character, have not introduced insuperable obstacles to the restoration of the classical idiom. I have my misgivings on this subject; for language is assuredly a growth from character, moulded to it as the bark to the tree; and all nations have undergone a certain mysterious change of character (a change, probably, produced by degrees, but yet amounting to a change of type), the progress of which, if we could trace it, would be among the most interesting problems of history. If it were not for this inner and moral change,

the modern Greek would be, as compared with the ancient, not a distinct tongue, so much as a corrupt dialect. In its vocabulary it is as like the old Greek as our modern English is like that of Chaucer's time. The Greek Liturgy will be of incalculable use in the education of the people, bridging over, as it does, the interval between the ancient and the modern languages; and every Greek will soon, we may hope, be able to read the New Testament in the original.

In speculating on the future fortunes of the Greek race, it is impossible not to form high hopes from considerations connected with their language. Whether or not the modern language can be as nearly assimilated to the ancient as sanguine persons hope, it is certain that the whole community will be intimately acquainted with both. The mastery of two languages is not a difficult achievement for a community, as has long since been proved by the examples of Ireland, the Swiss cantons, and other countries; and the Greeks have too much reverence for

their forefathers to remain unfamiliar with their tongue. What then may we not expect when that race which possesses probably the largest abilities of all European races are thus brought into contact at once with the noblest of languages, and the noblest of literatures? Their advantage will not consist merely in possessing close at hand, and entwined with their most cherished associations, the highest models in almost every species of composition; they are yet more fortunate in the selectness of their literature. Their classics will not be pushed out of sight, as ours so often are, not only by a crowd of works obviously ephemeral and worthless, and from which, therefore, all who have better taste, or any care for the culture of their minds, may be supposed to recoil; but also by multitudes of books of higher pretensions—the quasi-classics. Among us the wood is shut out by the trees: philosophy is hidden from us by the philosophers; and when we would pay our vows in the temples of poetry, the roads are so crowded with guides, (for the most part servants

out of livery), that we cannot push our way through the press. From this great evil the Greeks will be exempt for many a year. There will be nothing to prevent them from reading Plato and Aristotle till they understand them; Æschylus and Sophocles till they know them by heart; Homer till he enters like a burning fire into their souls; and Demosthenes until his "winged words" have woven a vesture for their spirits, which will lift them up, like the divinely-wrought armour of Achilles, and bear them over the battle-fields of life.

And thus the essential spirit of letters may be theirs without their becoming crammed with books. It is hard to say whether the intellect suffers most from the lack of food, or from the indigestion that follows excess. Even men of large abilities are rendered mentally inefficient and valueless, if their minds are filled up with the thoughts of other men, a misfortune that frequently happens to those who possess a memory disproportionately large when compared with their other faculties. In the ac-

quisition of knowledge a proportion should be observed between what a man can take in, and what he can carry without impediment to free movement; otherwise the sluggish sage will lie by as useless as a boa constrictor that has lately swallowed a stag, and has the horns still sticking out of his jaws. Such men may talk like an encyclopædia, but they will add little to the stores of original thought. Among them the lively Greek will not soon be numbered.

He will also, if he wisely keeps as much as he may to the stores of his ancient literature, be delivered from another still greater evil than that proceeding from a superfluity of books. He will not have his mind distracted, and his moral energies weakened, by the multitudinous *counter-influences* which assail the unfortunate student of modern literature. Our modern writers are heirs of all that have gone before them: but the inheritance being too large and somewhat heterogeneous, each author contents himself with occupying a part of it, and letting the rest run into waste. The consequence of this is, that

as different writers draw their influences from the most alien sources, the recent literature of every nation is a sort of Eolian cavern in which winds from all regions are in perpetual conflict, and the most energetic forces avail nothing, because no two of them tend one way. The Greek, in short, will have, if he does not throw away his advantage, the inestimable benefit of at once the best and the most select literature. Fortunate will he be if to this he adds no other reading besides that of those few palmary writers in each modern language, who may be considered to constitute the indigenous Bible—*the Book*—of the several nations to which they respectively belong.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNEY FROM ATHENS TO NAUPLIA.

Lazzaretto at the Peireus—Greek Guardianos—An old Frenchman—Sail to Epidaurus—Ancient Character and Scenery of Epidaurus—Ride from Epidaurus to Nàuplia—Extraordinary Vegetation—Remarkable Sunset—Gulf of Nauplia—Its Fortifications—Memorials of Venice—The Adieus of my French Friend—Good Fortune in picking up a Travelling Servant.

WISHING to visit Constantinople before I completed my tour in Greece, that I might have the more settled weather of advanced spring for my rambles through that country, I left Athens soon after my expeditions to Marathon and Eleusis. In order to preserve the continuity of my Greek tour, it may, perhaps, be better to postpone that portion of my narrative which relates to the farther East, until I have detailed the particulars of my visit to the Morea and to Delphi. On my return from Constantinople, I renewed my acquaintance with Greece through the disagreeable interven-

tion of a quarantine—an infliction to which all travellers in the east are obliged to submit.

I was fortunate in my Lazzaretto at the Peireus. Liberty, of course, I had not; but I had the best substitutes for it—abundance of books, and a climate so fresh and sweet that every breath of air seemed to waft with it pleasant recollections of the brakes and bowers it had been disturbing. The year had advanced since my departure, but not sufficiently to call up those summer heats and sandflies which are the chief grievance a resident in Athens complains of. Every evening I saw the sun setting over the Bay of Salamis, and watched the waves, tinted with crimson, bound up against the tomb of Themistocles, and run slantingly along the ruined fortifications which still remain, his more authentic monument. The space allowed me for exercise was not very liberal, consisting as it did of a small court covered with broken stones, and a flagged terrace along the sea, extending in front of our prison. The confinement would have been

more monotonous if the spot had been an inland one: but the variety of sea and sky is great; and whoever watches the lights and shades on the one, while he studies the clouds in the other, will discover that in Nature's great book there are countless pages which he has never had time to turn over, and with which he can never be more than superficially acquainted.

We landed late, were tumbled into the Lazaretto, and told to take possession of whatever rooms we pleased. They were all much alike, and my choice did not occupy much time. They were, however, altogether without furniture, and each person had to hire what he wanted. Never before did I know that I needed so many things; and as often as my messenger came back I found that some trifle was still deficient. We were also obliged to hire two old men, guardianos, whose primary office, far from being that of protecting us, was to shoot us in case we attempted to make our escape! Fortunately, the charge was moderate, and we did not put them to the trouble of executing the more

painful part of their duty. These men, though more than eighty years old, retained all the vivacity of their country, and many a time during the day I heard them pursuing each other in the court or corridor, pulling each other by the ears, or playing off practical jokes at each other's expense. One of them laughed much on observing the infinite trouble I had in ascertaining what articles of furniture I required, and came to my assistance, assuring me that he knew exactly all I needed. Acknowledging at once a superior genius, I submitted, and went to bed. Even then his attentions did not cease. He procured for me a pillow, and a second counterpane, in case the early morning should be cold—tucked the bed-clothes in carefully—looked at me once more—said, "Adesso vi manca solamente la moglie!"—and shuffled off before the good-humoured smile had vanished from his old face.

Day after day the attentions of my two old friends never flagged. They overflowed with that southern good nature which consists in

gratifying every one in his own way. My ways, I could perceive, surprised them; but they betrayed no intolerance on that account. They were much astonished at my pacing up and down by the sea half the night, lying in bed after sunrise, and taking no siesta; but they evidently considered these strange habits to arise from some necessity that probably affected all my nation equally. Still more surprised were they at my leaving the details of my dinner to the discretion of the cook who supplied it; and to a yet greater degree by my remaining nearly the whole day alone. Whatever my inclination, however, might be, they were always ready to comply with it, and generally eager to anticipate it. Observing that I wrote much they brought me, unasked, as many goose-quills as would have been sufficient to plume the wings of another Icarus, had I desired to soar beyond my prison walls. Towards the latter part of my imprisonment their attentions increased, and I soon discovered that the less trouble I took the more

certain I was to be supplied with all I could desire. I was unable to account for the extreme attention and kindness which they showed me, and for that affection and respect which, as I was assured by my fellow-prisoners, they always expressed for me. Not a little vain was I of the conquest I had so unwittingly made; nor was it till we were on the point of departure that the mystery was cleared up—and that not in a manner the most flattering. The fact was that, after much thought, and many consultations, they had arrived at the conclusion that I was an idiot. This conviction was based chiefly upon two circumstances, first that I spent all my time reading or writing, and, secondly, that I did not eat oil with my salad. It was this estimate of me which had not only doubled their charitable attentions, but also conciliated for me an unbounded veneration. The only drawback was, that several times each day the two old men came to my window, flattening against the glass their wrinkled and smiling faces, leaning each his arm on the shoulder of

the other, and staring at me for about twenty minutes on each occasion.

I had but two companions in my captivity. One of them was a grave, determined-looking man, by birth half English and half Swiss, who strode up and down musing on some speculative improvements he had undertaken on a property which he possessed in Greece. The other was a little old Frenchman, with bright eyes, a shrill voice, and a weather-beaten face, puckered into more wrinkles than the skin of a shrivelled apple in winter, who passed his days questing about the courts and inquiring into everything, drinking coffee, shrugging his shoulders, lifting his eyebrows, making rapid generalisations on all that he saw, ventilating aphorisms, and imagining numberless untried modes of cooking macaroni. Economy seemed to be his great passion, and as soon as he had done everything imaginable to abate "the inflammation of his weekly bills," he began to extend the same kind offices to me, and insisted upon managing everything on my behalf, so that I was spared all

trouble whatsoever. He took indeed as much care of my pocket as if he had intended to pick it the moment we were out of the Lazzaretto—an action, however, which I dare say he would have been as far from committing as any one in the world. His assiduity arose simply from the circumstance that he had nothing else with which to allay the impatience of a feverish temperament, and a mind, the restlessness of which was not abated by age. If his bones had been all whalebone, his skin India rubber (flesh he had none), and his blood quicksilver, he could not have been more incessantly active. He seemed ever eager and never earnest, as if the passions, dried up in him, had left him to a fancy something more than ebullient, and to an understanding whose energies were always "on wires." How often did I not hear the little man wrangling with the cook through the gratings of our court-yard, about my bill, ready to spit fire at him if there was an overcharge for pepper. Then he would come to my room, knock at the door, enter with a brisk bow and inflamed wrinkles,

lay the bill on the table, and say, "My maxim is, that it takes three Greeks to make one Jew! Hardly would they leave a tooth in your head if it arrived to you to be caught napping. Certainly I have been sent for your salvation. It is Telemachus and Mentor over again. Adieu! I must see about the coffee, or they will burn it. They are very capable of burning it if my eye is off them for a minute. Ten times a day do I call them one couple of apes in their dotage. Adieu, monsieur! Your Swiss friend lose much by his grand speculation: he takes no advice; his hand big enough to keep his pocket empty."

It was chiefly at dinner that I met my companions, and as two out of the three were somewhat taciturn, it was fortunate that the third was able to talk enough for us all. He inquired much about my travels, considering them, however, simply in a pecuniary point of view. "How much did they demand?" was always his question, and when I had mentioned what I had paid, up went the eyebrows and

shoulders, down went the corners of the mouth, and sometimes even down went the knife and fork, as he exclaimed "Voila! twice—three times—Mon Dieu! four times too much!" In return he gave us a long account of his adventures during a sojourn of many years in the East, the chief result of which appeared to be that he had stored up an inexhaustible supply of maxims, by which whatever he did was determined. He had a farm in Greece, but made nothing by it, owing, as he affirmed, to the ignorance and stupidity of his neighbours. Notwithstanding he became rich by economy; for it was his maxim that money was more easily kept than made. Many years before he had carried off a Turkish woman from Constantinople. He had also married her, for, as he said, "Why not? She made a very good wife. As for her religion, it was a rule with him not to interfere in such matters. His maxim was that the feminine department of every household was best left to the women. She might turn Christian if she liked it. Why

not?" Everything excited this practical philosopher, and nothing agitated him. On my mentioning that I intended to travel in the Morea, his reply was, "The robbers will cut off your nose and ears—just hand me the mustard—they will treat you as they did my son, who had the misfortune to be assassinated by them two months ago:—What execrable mustard: he shall not put it into his bill!" The little old man was as hard as if he had been beaten out of old nails, and yet not without good-natured impulses.

After passing but a single day at Athens (our captivity over), and visiting the Acropolis once more, I set out on an expedition to Epidaurus, Nauplia, and the ancient Argos. At the Peireus I procured a boat without difficulty, and set sail, my French friend travelling with me as far as Nauplia. A favourable breeze arched out our canvas, and the little boat ran, with a pleasant murmur, through the smooth and shining water, its garrulous babble for the most part accompanied by another sound as unceasing, the

chatter of my companion, who seldom ceased speaking, except to take snuff. Ere many hours had gone by we had left Salamis on our right, Egina on our left, and the mountains of Epidaurus began to define their outlines. That night we had to sleep as well as we could in the open boat. The next morning we found ourselves in a bay clasped by mountains, which sloped steeply down to the sea in every direction except one. That exception was the entrance to a long and sinuous valley, which, though level with the water, appeared, from the shadow that slanted across its remoter end, to wind downward with a soft descent. Its short and dusky grass was still grey with the morning dew; but the sun which had risen as we landed struck with reflected beams the western rocks, near its marble portals, and flashed upon a few stunted pines that plumed its crags.

The glories of Epidaurus are past away. While the triumphs of military as of religious architecture remain still in many parts of Greece, no vestige is found of the city dedicated to the

Power who presided over the healing art. The region of Epidaurus was consecrated to Æsculapius, the son of Apollo and the nymph Coronis, because it was on one of its mountains that the child, exposed there by its mother, was found by a herdsman, attracted to him by the golden beams which played about his head, and shone through grass and fern, as a she-goat of the flock suckled the infant. His temple was one of the largest in Greece, and under its protection, and the influence of a salubrious climate, innumerable establishments for the infirm gathered around. To these were added, by degrees, all that the sick or the idle need to amuse them—theatres, places of entertainment, public baths, libraries for the studious, and groves for the thoughtful or the sad. Gradually Epidaurus became a place of resort to patients from every part of Greece, acquired its peculiar privileges and usages, and may, therefore, be considered as one of the centres of Hellenic unity. Its monuments have crumbled into dust, like the bodies of those who found relief there:

its serene beauty remains; and if quiet scenes, fit to store the mind of a sufferer with images of peace, if cold groves, if dewy and secluded pastures, and gales as refreshing as ever ascended "from the fields of sleep" to fan a fevered brow, be auspicious to health, the region of Æsculapius is still potent to remove some real maladies, and many an imaginary disease.

We rode on through this valley, which in some places became narrow and rugged, for many miles, stopping occasionally to look back, through a vista in the olive woods, or from an eminence that surmounted their grey-green roof, upon the Epidaurian bay, girdled round with its mountains and its mountain isles. Our guides were impatient of these delays, and warned us that we should be late, and that the way was not easy. In this they spoke the truth. Spring had caught the pathway in her nets; our horses with difficulty pushed on, now along the gravelly bed of a river, half overgrown with oleander, now among rocks thick with arbutus, and now among brakes of almond,

which left the coat, both of horse and rider, richly variegated with white and pink flowers. Never, surely, was the Bull that carried off Europa as richly attired as those unfortunate animals who swung about their long tails as a terror to gadflies, and would have heartily rejoiced in a cool plunge into the "ocean stream." All the flowers in the world seemed to have met to produce the affluent vegetation which withstood our progress; the eye, however, could hardly stray to anything else, so charmed was it with the tree which plainly had the mastery in the floral strife. The Judas-tree flushed the hill side sometimes for a quarter of a mile together, with its roseate thickets. Every sunny mound was enriched, every shadowy recess, at the angle of a stream, was lighted by one of those "incense-bearing trees;" while the dew-drops (still secreted in the shade) trembled in galaxies from its branches, or fell in glittering showers when the birds dinned the air, and shook the spray, with a more than usual impetuosity. Under them and around went on

the impatient workings of the Spring, whose progress and pulsations one could almost have fancied were palpable. The plant which produced the most brilliant effect, next to the Judas-tree, was the cistus, which trailed its leaves, not only over the fragrant carpetting of thyme and lentiscus, but also over the holly and laurestinus—nay, which often littered the broad roof of the ilex with its starry bloom, and scarcely abstained from the olive itself.

No sooner had we lost the last views of the bay of Epidaurus, than the gulf of Nauplia lay before us, surrounded by its mountain ranges. Those mountains are yet higher than the Epidaurian, and seen from the point of view from which we contemplated them, presented that fortunate combination of outlines which is but seldom to be found in the noblest mountains, and which fills the eye with a harmony as satisfactory as is impressed upon the ear by a perfect chord. Over the broken foreground of the steep which we had nearly ascended, six or seven different mountain chains were visible at

once, retiring behind one another, and the loftiest covered with snow. Our sunset was past; but they were enjoying theirs still, and bathed in floods of crimson and gold, the remoter ranges being clad in a paler lilac, while their glens were streaked with shadows of a dimmer violet. Even my little old Frenchman I thought was moved by the sight, for, though he had been much disgusted at the length of the way, a gleam of satisfaction suddenly broke out, wherever there was room for it, on his rugged and crumpled face. "Napoli," he said, "is near;" and added, with a violent shake of the bridle, and kicking his little foot into the side of his horse, "Allons! the dinner attends us!"

A reflection of the same sort seemed to occur to our horses, or else the cooler breeze of evening had refreshed them, for they put out very willingly their strength, which hitherto they had apparently been *economising* as carefully as if they had been indoctrinated by my companion. On they went at a brisk pace; my friend's tongue

was also once more unloosed, and again he scattered on all sides a countless multitude of maxims and aphorisms. As the road descended the hill, our speed increased; our guides, and those who had attached themselves to our party (for the Greeks are gregarious, and a horseman soon attracts a swarm about him), singing, shouting, laughing, and making more noise in their advance than a troop of cavalry. By the time we were in a canter, my horse put his foot on a round stone and fell, the rest of our cavalcade immediately closing in upon, and very nearly riding over us. Instantly my friend had reined in his mule, turned back his head, and addressed me with the utmost politeness: "Est-ce-que Monsieur est mort?" "No," I replied, "but my horses' knees are broken." "Allons, allons, mon cher, montez toujours,—le dîner nous attend," was his rejoinder. On, once more, we galloped, and reached Nauplia just as the mountains beyond the bay had let go their last hold of sunset. A pale green twilight sky stretched behind them in clear infinitude, "serene as the age of

the righteous." Two long, thin clouds, dark, but with a glossiness about their edges, smooth as a nautilus shell, and shaped with an indescribable sweetness, floated far away into that green distance. One of them was lost before we had dismounted.

While my friend went into the inn to order all things aright, I made my evening tour of inspection. I was well rewarded. The gulf of Nauplia is on a grander scale than that of Salamis or Corfu, and in all respects leaves the over-celebrated bay of Naples far behind it. The mountains that surround it are real mountains, and the wide expanse of water is proportioned to them. The predominant character of the scene is that of a bright and jubilant majesty. Nauplia, so called, in old times, from a son of Neptune, was, during the middle ages, an important sea-port, and is now the most considerable city in Greece except Athens. It is strongly fortified by nature, and the hand of man has done much to add to its security. High up, on a crag that adjoins it, stands the

citadel, built by the Venetians. On many parts of the walls, which rise out of, and sometimes blend with the rock, you meet Venetian inscriptions, and are confronted by that far-famed lion, whose shaggy head and affluent mane still attest, in so many parts of the world, the past greatness of the "haughty Republic," which for fourteen centuries sat between the East and the West, and extended an iron or a golden sceptre far over each. The lions hold their ground still, and, I hope, may for many a year; when I passed them, however, their rocky heads were so swathed over with the masses of blue flowers which had crept about them, that one might have almost passed them unseen. Such, perhaps, is their best security.

On returning to the inn I found that no one in it could speak a word of any language except Greek. Not being able therefore to enquire for my companion I walked in search of him all over the house. I found him where I ought to have looked first—in the kitchen. A pair of red slippers, which one of the women of the

household had lent him, engulfed his small feet: his head was surmounted by his tall black night-cap; and he stood with his face to the fire, in earnest, and apparently angry, converse with a great iron pot boiling thereon. Not a word could I understand, for he spoke Greek, either because it was his "maxim," that the contents of the pot were most likely to understand him, if addressed in the language of the country to which they belonged, or more probably because he was railing at three girls (though out of scorn he turned his back to them) who stood behind him wondering, and at the master of the house who sat cross-legged on the kitchen table, playing with a cat. Dinner was ready at last, and we sat down to it with a traveller's appetite. "All this you owe to me," he said: "without doubt, if I had not been there, they would have given you the cat to eat, and cooked it *diablement* beside. I find that they are all infidels and impostors. Three Greeks make one Jew! Mon Dieu! that I should live among barbarians!"

The next morning, discovering that there was

no one at Nauplia who could speak any language but Greek, I was much puzzled to know how I was to pick up a travelling servant or guide to conduct me on my way. I betook myself for assistance to my French friend, who was about to return to his unprofitable farm in the neighbourhood. I found him already in the saddle, his spectacles on his nose, his snuff-box in his hand, before him a small trunk containing his worldly goods, and behind him half a kid which he had bought on economical terms at the inn. "Voilà!" he exclaimed, when I explained my difficulty, "I always told you these men were barbarians. There is not one of them who can speak French! With difficulty do they speak Greek. Often do they not understand me. My advice to you is to take the greatest care not to be murdered or robbed. Without phrase you must get a valet-de-place at once. Notwithstanding those are the worst impostors of all. Always it is necessary to economise. Adieu, Monsieur." So saying, he lifted up his hat and made me a low bow. His black night-

cap at the same moment slipped over his nose, and his horse trotted on. In a moment after I heard him chattering as fast as ever, making, no doubt, rapid generalisations, and prophesying to his guide concerning my approaching fate.

Somewhat puzzled by my position (though it was not the first time that I had found myself alone among people who could not speak any language in common with me) I turned into the town, resolved to wait quietly for some favourable chance, and in the meantime to see whatever was to be seen. Fortune, perceiving that I was not going to hunt her down, was kind enough to visit me without a very long delay. As I was inspecting the fortifications of the citadel, I heard a voice behind me, and, turning, saw a very nondescript sort of being, who addressed me first by the title of Effendi, and then by that of Eccellenza, and assured me that he was the man I was looking for. He intimated to me, moreover, that he spoke more languages than were heard at the tower of Babel; a fact which I did not dispute, though

I doubted much his being able to speak two sentences of truth in any one of them from sunrise to sunset. Notwithstanding, I was very glad to engage his services: we soon got into conversation in Italian; and after telling me that he had visited all countries, and recounting many adventures, he assured me that it was not for the sake of money that he proposed to accompany me, but solely with a view to my convenience; and that he was ready to set off at a moment's notice, without specifying terms like another man, but simply on an agreement that he was to have five francs a-day, his board and lodging, a horse for himself, and another for his luggage, his expenses back from whatever place I might leave him at, a buonamano, and my good opinion, as well as lasting friendship. I told him that the terms suited me, that I already considered him an oracle, as well as a holy man, and a man of the world; and that I should take him with me to Delphi and Patras, visiting first the ruins on the Argolic plain.

CHAPTER XII.

TIRYNTHUS—ARGOS—MYCENÆ.

The Ruins of Tirynthus—Early Specimens of the Arch—The Plain of Argos—Theatre carved out of the Rock—Acropolis of Argos—The Hereum—Antiquity of Argos—Homeric Recollections—Legendary History—A Night on the Argolic Plain—Contrast between Italian and Grecian Scenery—Colossal Ruins of Mycenæ—Gateway of the Lions—Tomb of Agamemnon—Stones of its Vault.

EARLY the next morning we mounted our horses, and in a short time found ourselves close to the ruins of Tirynthus, the most ancient monuments, at least of military architecture, to be found in Greece. Tirynthus was an ancient city in the time of Homer, and belongs to that age which survives in legend only, and has no part in history. It was the early residence of Hercules, and the home of Alcmena his mother. The legend that its walls were built by the Cyclopes will hardly seem extravagant to any one who looks on them,

and who is moved to as much admiration of them as Homer expressed. The citadel alone remains. Its walls consist of prodigious blocks of stone put together after a fashion ruder even than that usually called Cyclopean; those blocks not being perfectly wrought, and fitted into each other, but consisting simply of rocks with their upper and lower surface smoothed. I explored a long dark gallery, the walls of which are connected by huge stones that lean against each other, and meet at an acute angle. In another place the citadel is entered through a subterranean passage on a scale yet larger, the arching being in this instance effected, not by two stones, but by four or five at each side, meeting in the centre, and sustained by their own weight without any cement. And yet it has been affirmed by some that the Romans invented the arch—as if they could have discovered anything which escaped the penetration of the Greeks. It is much more likely that the Greeks did not admire the arch, than that they did not, at any period, under-

stand its principle. The main object of Greek architecture, from the time that it had outgrown its Asiatic associations, was simply beauty, and not either constructive vastness or mystic symbolism. For this reason the Greeks did not need the arch. It corresponded well, on the other hand, with the character of that great people who made the whole world pass under their yoke; and in that sense we are right in associating it with them. Building as they did so frequently with brick, the Romans were, indeed, dependent on the arch. The Herculean citadel commands nearly the noblest view of the plain of Argolis.

Traversing the greater part of that plain, I arrived, before sunset, at the site of the far-famed Argos—the spot sacred to Juno, and the most ancient in its records of any in Greece, with but one exception. It is remarkable how rapidly our impressions with respect to one object of interest are sometimes modified in the presence of another. A face which at first sight seemed nearly perfect becomes effeminate,

coarse, or betrays some other defect when contrasted with another face, not perhaps on the whole superior, but analogous to it, and yet in some particular different. My former impressions of Greece were thus in some measure modified on this occasion. When at Athens, the antiquity of all around me, as well as its beauty, was a thought seldom absent from my mind. Standing at Argos, and ruminating over its history, Athens seemed but an upstart which had shot up rapidly, and burst into short and sudden bloom, ages after Argos had been delivered from the disquietudes of mortal life. The early monuments of Athens date from about the time of the Persian war, B.C. 490. Argos and Mycenæ were traditionally great in the time of Homer some 400 years before—venerable in the days of Agamemnon, 300 years earlier—and began to exist more than 600 years previously, if we are to rely on the historians who affirm that the kingdom of Argos was established under Inachus in the year B.C. 1856. The kingdom of Sicyon alone

was yet more ancient, having been founded in the year B.C. 2089, about two centuries and a half after the deluge.

The remains of Argos are few, but are of deep interest. The chief of them is a vast theatre, carved out of the side of the hill that encloses the Argolic plain at its southern extremity, and situated beneath the Acropolis, a conical hill, not much less than a thousand feet in height. A few of the substructions of the citadel remain, but, unfortunately, they are mixed up with some of the Venetian fortifications. The theatre will, probably, last as long as the world lasts, hewn as it is out of the everlasting rock. Its steps rise one above another to an immense height, and are divided into three tiers, the lowest of which contains thirty-six, the middle sixteen, and the highest fourteen. From this theatre you enjoy a glorious view of another and a natural theatre, consisting of the plain of Argolis and the Argolic bay—one vast stage, half of it green and half azure —shut in by two semicircular ranges of

mountains. That view was enriched for an Argive with objects which we behold no more—with the walls and towers of Tirynthus to the east, those of Mycenæ to the north, and, beyond the river Inachus, but at a distance of several miles, the vast and lonely Hereum, or Temple of Juno. Of this temple nothing remains but some traces of the foundation. The fane of the Matron Goddess, like one of the chief Basilicas of Ravenna, was situated at a considerable distance from the crowded ways of men—a circumstance which, doubtless, added to its solemnity and to the devotion of her worshippers.

Ascending to the highest tier of those rocky steps, and resting there, I mused—as who must not have done?—on the revolutions which that plain had witnessed. It is, perhaps, well that such thoughts are but seldom realised by us:—a Greek, who had felt them deeply, would hardly have found much interest in the most stirring events of the late war, or in any triumph which can be effected by us creatures of an hour. We

would not allow ourselves to be driven if we did not wear blinkers; and if we carried our heads high enough to see far before and behind us, our feet would be slow to move. That rock, which looked on me as a modern intruder, had, doubtless, looked equally so on the herald who toiled thither to inform the Argive people of the Marathonian victory. The classical age must have been regarded as a "profane novelty" by old men who remembered the traditions of the heroic age. The heroic age itself must have seemed secular and coarse, full of insolence and of self-will, compared with that still earlier patriarchal age, when Argos reposed under the shade of her hereditary kings, and bequeathed no history because she committed few crimes. The King of Men himself, "Shepherd of his people" as he was, may have seen many a graver head than that of Thersites shaken at that sceptre so unlike a crook, and been warned by many a priest besides Chryses that pride must have a fall. Homer, if from that theatre his eyelids ever felt the glow of a sunset which

he could see no more, must have known that his own poetry but preserved (reflecting, like the mountain ranges around, the light of a luminary past away) the sunset recollections of an age whose glory had vanished and was no more.

His song, however, has at least done what neither marble, nor iron, nor gold has done;—it has preserved the memory of that heroic age. As I gazed on the scene around me, I thought not, at first, of Inachus or of Danaus, of Asia or of Egypt. "Vixerunt multi fortes ante Agamemnona:" notwithstanding, none of them recurred to my recollection. The drama celebrated on the wide plain beneath me was the multitudinous, all-compassing drama of the Homeric Epic. A lost world found room to live again in that charmed circle. The horses grazing on the peaceful mead, far off, seemed the "tempest-footed steeds" for which the Junonian plain was celebrated: the poppies at my feet were tinged with the victim's blood. I thought of that night to which Europe and the world are indebted for so much that is

highest in human intelligence, the night of the embarcation for Troy. The Argive host advanced towards the sea, lifting a forest of spears that retorted the last beams of day. Side by side, car-borne, in the midst, moved on "the brother kings of Atreus' royal race," peaceful heralds stepping beside, and leaning on the rein; the sacrifice to Neptune far before them; and boys and cymbal-tossing virgins closing the grave procession. They reached at last the shore. The sacrificial flame rose higher, and flashed from the wave. There was a pause, and then, once more, I heard the cymbals and the fifes, and, when they ceased, the grating of the "great black ships," as they were drawn down the strand, and the murmur of proud satisfaction with which they glided into the "divine sea."

Such reveries have no end. I saw Inachus land with his colonists, and hew down the primeval forests—Danaus steal from the palace where he had been hospitably sheltered, excite the people by pointing to the dried up streams,

and expel the last of the Inachian princes. I saw the last of his own race driven from the throne by the Heraclidæ—Argos captured by the kindred people of Mycenæ—the historian Pausanias wandering among its ruins, and copying its inscriptions. The moon, whose broad and golden shield had hung suspended above the East not long after the sun dropped in the West, had clomb high, and was pouring a white light far over the plain, before my ruminations had worn themselves out. My servant, meantime, had provided a dinner not far off, and had addressed me more than once without receiving a very definite answer. Once more he sidled up to me and assured me, "that the fowl he had ordered would be quite overdone, poor creature, unless I came to eat him." My conscience did not allow me to keep a much-travelled, large-experienced man, like the Ulysses who attended me, any longer fasting; and when conscience is seconded by appetite, its mandates are seldom disobeyed. Accordingly, we descended to the modern Argos, a flourishing

village, and the fowl was absolved from the necessity of waiting any longer.

The house in which we passed the night adjoined the village, but stood apart from it, and was attached to a farm on the property of General Church. It was large, clean, boasted beds (a rare possession), and had a still greater advantage in being wholly free from the vermin that infest most houses in Greece. The night was one of those glorious, beaming nights of Greece, when all things rejoice in a splendour far diffused, when the face of nature betrays nothing of suspicion or timidity, and little of reserve, and her breast expands with confidence and pleasure; a warm fresh night, in which a Helena or a Hermia might stray in the wilderness, and sleep in the moonlight forest without danger of injury. I could not go to bed, and walked for hours up and down the open gallery beneath the roof, watching the glazed and glistening field and fancying that I could catch a glimpse also of the glimmering sea, listening to the rustling of the plane-trees hard by and

fancying that I heard in its intervals the more constant murmur of the Inachus, as well as a soft and hushing sound which rippled up in every direction from the dewy grass. For a long time I could not imagine why images connected with Sorrento were constantly rising before me. "Am I not," I asked myself, "where I have long wished to be? Why, then, can I not be content with it? What have I to do with the Syrens' cave, the house of Tasso, the deep ravines, the heaving waters, or the tesselated pavements beneath them?" At last, I discovered that I associated the two places together, in consequence of that rich and delicate odour which embalms the air of each. Never, except on the "Piano di Sorrento," have I enjoyed a fragrance approaching to that of the Argolic plain by night, a fragrance which proceeded from the breath of the lemon-groves, mingled with that of the grass and its honey-dews, and lightened and pierced through by the thrice-sifted purity of the breeze from the sea. In many of the Greek bays this exquisite

odour salutes you, the plain being commonly as rich as the mountains around it are severe; but in no other have I ever found it so delightful as at Argos, and that part of Italy which is like a fragment of Greece detached. I enjoyed it, I am sure, even in my sleep:—and so passed the one night which I spent

"In Argolis beside the echoing sea."

Before five o'clock the next morning, my trusty servant informed me that our horses were ready, and I rose refreshed, for a perfect climate serves us in a large part for sleep as well as food. We directed our course to Mycenæ, and the tomb of Agamemnon. On our way we passed a series of landscapes, in some measure analogous to what the nobler portion of Southern Italy (Magna Græcia) might present if it could get rid of its "holy bounds of property," and open itself out with the same sea-like frankness and expansiveness. Rightly to interpret the best scenery of Italy, one should have previously seen that of Greece, although, for the most part,

the two are very different. The scenery of Greece is far more determined, and marked in its character. An Italian landscape wears often an ambiguous expression, the meaning of which is stamped by its architectural or atmospherical accidents. In Lombardy the dusky tower gives it something of a northern character; near Venice the clustered domes make it look Oriental; and near Pæstum its temples mark it Grecian. Italy has an equivocal loveliness, which, like some engaging but effeminate dispositions, allows its character to be for a time whatever may be impressed upon it by extrinsic circumstance; its prevailing expression being that of an apprehensive and ever varying sweetness, so sensitive that it changes with every change in the clouds, and puts one in mind of Shakspeare's description of Cressida, "nay, her foot speaks." Greece is yet more rich where she is rich; but her cliffs are lean and lofty, her rocks are marble, not tufo or lava; her beauty has in it ever an element of the sublime, and reminds you yet more of a Pallas than of Aphrodite.

After a ride of some hours, we arrived at the ruins of Mycenæ, the most ancient, and in their size and architecture, the most wonderful of all Greek remains. The citadel of Mycenæ stood on the platform of a hill, about a thousand feet in length, and five hundred in breadth at the summit; that hill being formed by the converging roots of the mountains as they descend into the plain, and being almost islanded by two mountain streams, which rush from their rocky sources and clasp its base. The walls which encompass the summit of this eminence are composed of stones so enormous that how they were ever placed on that height I cannot imagine; nor was it until I had carefully examined them and observed the scientific precision with which they were fitted together that I could convince myself that they were other than rocks shaped with a singular degree of regularity. One of them which I measured was fifteen feet square, another was eighteen feet by twelve. These prodigious remains embrace an ample circuit, and vary much in their height, which

is commonly inconsiderable. The ruins of two gate-ways also remain, one of which sustains above its portal the most ancient piece of sculpture known in Greece—two lions carved in low relief on a block of green basalt. These lions are apparently the only memorials of an extinct school of art, as Homer's two great Epics are of a lost world of poetry. In a position nearly erect they lean against each other, separated by a broken pillar. Whether they had any remoter meaning, or simply expressed the Royal power of the Atridæ, we cannot learn. When we look upon structures which were ruins in the days of Thucydides we must be content with seeing as much as he saw, and knowing as little. There stood those lions ages before the first stone of the Parthenon was laid, and before Peisistratus had collected the poems which celebrated the King of Men; and there, too, lay around them, even at that time, like Gods dethroned and wounded on the battle field, the Titan fragments which we still behold.

Not far from these walls I reached the end of

my pilgrimage—the tomb of the monarch who reduced Troy. Some antiquarians assert that this building was the treasury of the wealthy Mycenæ; I know, however, of no justification for so unpoetical a theory. The mighty vault bears the aspect of a sepulchral chamber, such as an impassioned and sorrowing nation might fitly raise. To enter it you must descend slightly. The interior is a circular hall, forty-five feet in diameter, walled round with enormous blocks, and forming, at the height of forty-five feet, a dome so sharp as to resemble a hollow cave. Within this chamber is another of the same shape, and quite dark, twenty feet in diameter, and fifteen feet high. Over its entrance, to pass through which you must stoop, hangs a stone nine feet by seven in size. The largest, however, of these blocks is that which surmounts the outer entrance. I measured it, and found it to be no less than twenty-one feet by fifteen, and four feet thick! Its size is the more wonderful in consequence of the elevation at which it stands, and its being only supported

at the ends. The stones of this architectural and monumental Stonehenge are cut perfectly smooth.

Such is the tomb of Agamemnon, the first and last captain of Confederate Greece, the warrior who led to a remote eastern strand what may be regarded as the crusading army of the ancient world, (since it fought to vindicate domestic rights, and to punish the perfidious and profane violation of hospitality), the chief before whose lifted sceptre the sword of Achilles dropped its point, the father of Iphigenia, the master, not unloved, whose fate Cassandra prophesied before his palace portals, tearing the prophetic fillet from her brows, when, at the instance of Clytemnestra, he had descended from his car, and planted his feet upon the rich carpets rolled to it from the gates — those carpets which the sea,

"Eternal dyer of the blood-red robes,"

had imbued with a Tyrian dye, dark as that stain so soon to suffuse the marble bath. The peaceful scene was not unworthy of the

memorials it enshrined. Behind the Acropolitan hill and sepulchral chamber rose two vast rocky steeps, one of them luminous as day, the other dark with the shade of its broad compeer, the projecting spurs of that mountain range which girds, "with stony belt," the Argolic plain. All around, beneath the vault, and even among the fragments of the citadel, the ripening corn diffused a Lethean sound, soft as the whisper in a death-chamber. The funeral feast demands its pomps as well as the wedding festival, and enjoyed them on this occasion; for in the shadow of those old walls the patches of corn were brightened with multitudinous poppies, purple and crimson, tinged as if with "Proserpine's ever-setting sun," and diffusing around their heavy opiate odour. Nature, too, was pleased, after her impartial fashion, to intermix the gay with the grave; and the bases of the slope, and the fields all around, were dressed in flowers of many a hue—the blue "forget-me-not," the convolvulus, the campagnola, lilies of every sort, with clustered bells and snowy urns—Irises,

that bent low with their own weight, and seemed to listen at the ground—the abundant yellow asphodel, and countless flowers beside, which, wasting no grief on a king who had had his day three thousand years ago, transmitted, in their own brief hour, that vernal celebration which began in Eden, and rejoiced as if the child of Ceres had been that morning loosed from the Shades. Among them, as they waved in the breeze, the insects glanced: the Psyche floated above them, and the graver dragon-fly pursued his prey:—the bees also murmured in their tents a drowsy chime, half lost in the hoarser monotony of the two-fold stream hard by.

END OF VOL. I.

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